Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • March/April 2008 • $4.50

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KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS IN RUSSIA

Past and Present

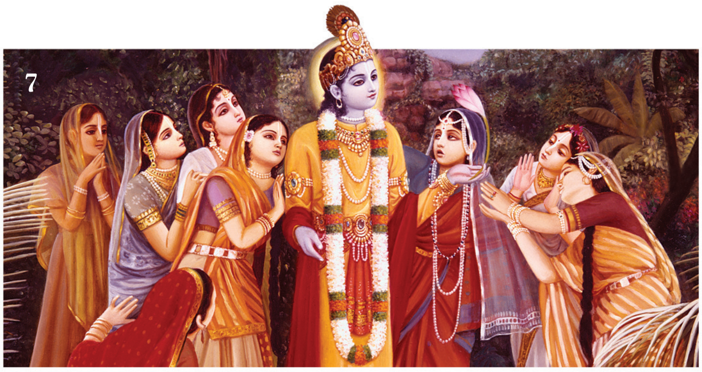
ALSO:

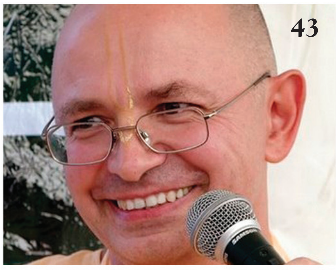
Seven Stages of Purification
Increasing Our Attachment for Kṛṣṇa
The Quest to Create Life

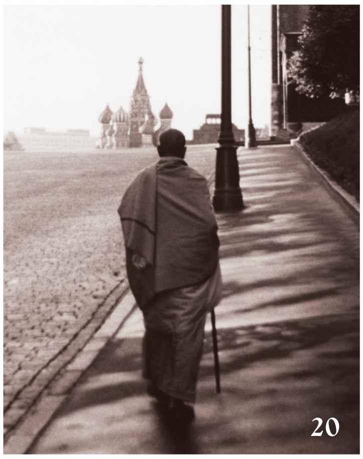
Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

Back to Godh

Founded 1944 • Vol. 42, No. 2 • March / April 2008







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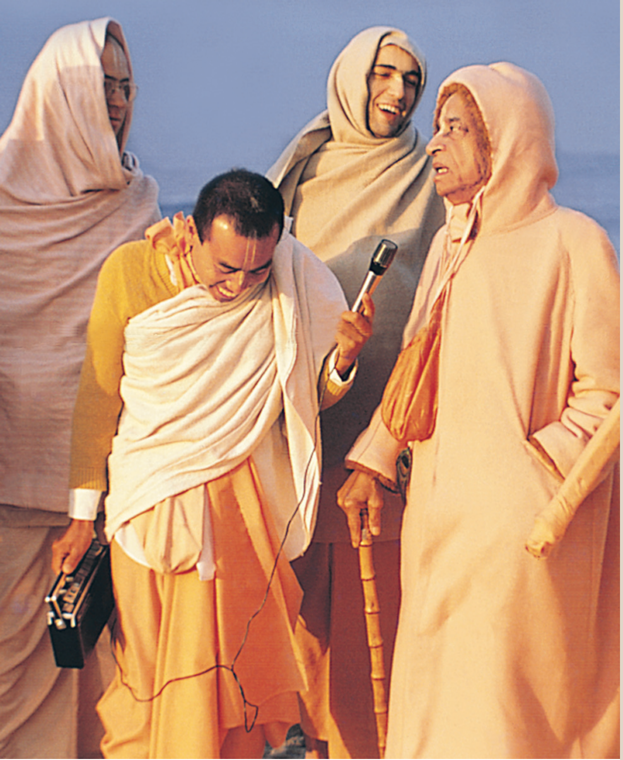
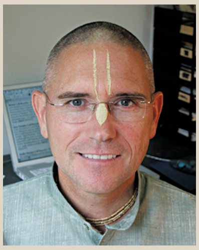
COVER A computerized drawing of the proposed Hare Kṛṣṇa temple and cultural center in Moscow. To learn about the temple and the history of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in the former Soviet Union, please see the articles beginning on pages 20, 43, and 48.

> *"These rascal scientists have no common sense. Where is the machine that is working without any operator? Is there such a machine within their experience? How can they suggest that nature is working automatically? Nature is a wonderful machine, but the operator is God, Kṛṣṇa. That is real knowledge."—p. 19*



WELCOME



THE BULK of this issue focuses on the history and current status of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in the former Soviet Union. In 1971, Śrīla Prabhupāda spent only a few days in Moscow. But there he met a young Russian who would become his disciple and spearhead the rapid underground growth of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the USSR.

Despite persecution, the "Soviet Hare Kṛṣṇas" pressed on, and since the fall of Communist rule, the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in the Commonwealth of Independent States has grown exponentially. In "Checkmate! ISKCON's Victory in Russia," Satyarāja Dāsa traces the history of ISKCON from Prabhupāda's visit up to the present-day breakthrough in Moscow, where Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees have finally received land and permission to build a magnificent temple.

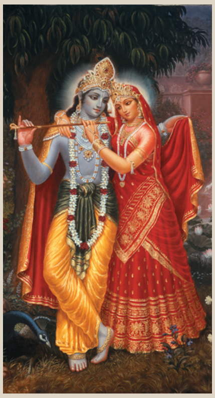
Two of the main driving forces behind the Moscow temple project are Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami and Brahmānanda Purī Dāsa. Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī's "Two Seeds that Grew in Iron" tells how each came to Kṛṣṇa and flourished spiritually despite the oppressive atmosphere.

The book excerpt "A Taste of Salted Bread" reveals the courage and determination of Kṛṣṇa devotees who risked everything to bring Kṛṣṇa's message to a land under atheistic rule.

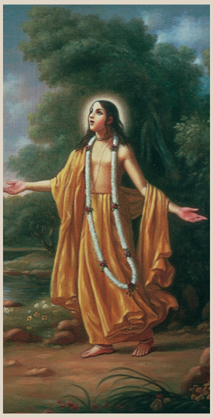
Hare Kṛṣṇa.—*Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor*

OUR PURPOSES

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.



Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are together the one Supreme Absolute Truth.



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined incarnation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, inaugurated the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa five hundred years ago.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

BACK TO GODHEAD
The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

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Letters

Why No Eggs?

Many people understand abstinence from meat, but with eggs it is harder to explain. Nowadays eggs are unfertilized, and there is nothing being harmed (as in an embryo), so people question the difference between consuming unfertilized eggs and drinking milk.

Nritya Ramani
Collegeville, Minnesota

Our reply: In the cookbook *The Hare Kṛṣṇa Book of Vegetarian Cooking,* author Ādirāja Dāsa writes, "Those who abstain from meat but eat eggs or fish are not considered true vegetarians because they are eating flesh, even though it may be hidden, as in eggs, under a calcium coating. One who becomes a vegetarian only to avoid killing may see no reason to refuse unfertilized eggs, but if we take the Vedic view that all flesh is unfit for human consumption, it makes sense to shun eggs, which, fertilized or not, are nothing but the assembled materials for the bodies of chickens." Eggs are not something attractive for Kṛṣṇa to eat, and we offer everything to Kṛṣṇa before consuming it.

As for milk, Kṛṣṇa created a symbiotic relationship between cows and human society. Cows produce more milk than their calves need, and the extra is meant for human consumption. Kṛṣṇa Himself played the role of a cowherd boy in His youth when He appeared in this world (as well as eternally in the spiritual realm), and He greatly enjoys milk and the many palatable foods made from it.

Seeking Guidance

I am interested in guidance on how to live the life of a devotee. It is very easy when you are with other devotees or in a temple, studying the *Gītā,* but it is difficult for me to maintain that same focus at my work. Any suggestions would be helpful.

Carolyn
Via the Internet

Our reply: It is nice to note that you would like to keep focused on Kṛṣṇa even at work. Yes, it is easy, as you say, when we are with devotees or at a temple. But Arjuna had the same problem you have. And he was wondering if he should renounce everything and focus on Kṛṣṇa exclusively. But Kṛṣṇa encouraged him to keep fighting but at the same time remember Him.

How do we maintain this focus on Kṛṣṇa at work? If we are in love with someone, we tend to keep remembering him or her even in the midst of our work or under any circumstance. Kṛṣṇa is the supremely attractive person. We have a natural tendency to love Him, but it is covered now. So to revive that love, we need to chant the holy names of Kṛṣṇa regularly and read about Him from *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.*

If you are not already doing so, chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* every day as much as possible, either quietly on beads or singing by yourself or with others. Read the scriptures that tell about Kṛṣṇa, and offer your food to Him. You can do these things before you go to work or when you return. There is also a lot of opportunity to associate with devotees through various websites, such as Krishna.com.

By practice, Kṛṣṇa will remain in your mind, you will start seeing Him in every action you do at work, and you will do your job well.

BTG Reaching Inmates

I am a second-generation Indian-American devotee. I was born in Gujarat state and raised in Atlanta. I have been in prison for almost 3½ years and have about 3½ years to go, unless I am paroled earlier.

I cannot express in words what BTG means to me and what impact this magazine has had on people's lives in prison. There are so many testimonials of "BTG-*līlā*" in prisons that I could give you. Here are just a few:

Once, a South American inmate started chanting and dancing when he saw my BTG and found out that I am a devotee. The other Latino inmates smiled and listened attentively as he told us how his old girlfriend in his native Uruguay was a devotee, how he went to the temple, ate *prasādam,* etc. He told me, "You have a real good culture, real good religion."

Another time, at another prison, another Latino inmate saw the BTG in my hands and immediately started chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and dancing in ecstasy. I hadn't mentioned a thing, and we hadn't even introduced ourselves to each other. He told me how he used to go to the Laguna Beach temple, how nice the devotees were, how he liked the programs and the food. He immediately took the BTG. Śrīla Prabhupāda's BTG has a transcendental life of its own.

Another time, I was moved into an open dorm, where I knew only one person out of eighty or so inmates. I had the BTG issue of Śrī Pañca-tattva in Māyāpur and another issue, which had His Holiness Śrīdhara Swami's life story. I hadn't even set my mattress and belongings down when a crowd of people immediately started picking up and looking through the BTGs, saying they wanted to read them. They felt a spontaneous attraction.

It seems that no matter what religion, viewpoint, opinions, background, experiences, culture, or knowledge a person has, there is something for everybody in BTG. I want to thank you and the staff Vaiṣṇavas for writing and producing such an excellent, interesting, spiritually entertaining, and enlightening magazine.

Hardik Kaswala
Calhoun State Prison
Morgan, Georgia

BTG-Inspired Bhakti

I am a twenty-four-year-old man incarcerated in Florida. The first contact I ever had with this wonderful movement was in January of 2002. I had written Muktakeśa Dāsa of the ISKCON Prison Ministry and asked a few questions. His reply came with two copies of BTG. When I opened the pages and laid my eyes on a picture of Lord Kṛṣṇa, I was instantly hooked. Since then, I've stayed in contact with devotees regularly, and I practice the philosophy to the best of my ability.

I just wanted to send a big thank you and to let you know that I'm very grateful for the service you provide.

Bobby Glover
Hardee Correctional Institute
Bowling Green, Florida

CORRECTION

In the article on ISKCON Ujjain in the last issue, the caption for the photo on page 28 misidentified one of the three personalities pictured. They are in fact Kṛṣṇa (with peacock feathers) and Balarāma, along with their classmate Sudāmā. They are facing a larger deity of Sāndīpani Muni in the temple, which sits at the site of his ashram.

Replies were written by Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā Dāsa. Please write to us at: BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616, USA. E-mail: editors@krishna.com.

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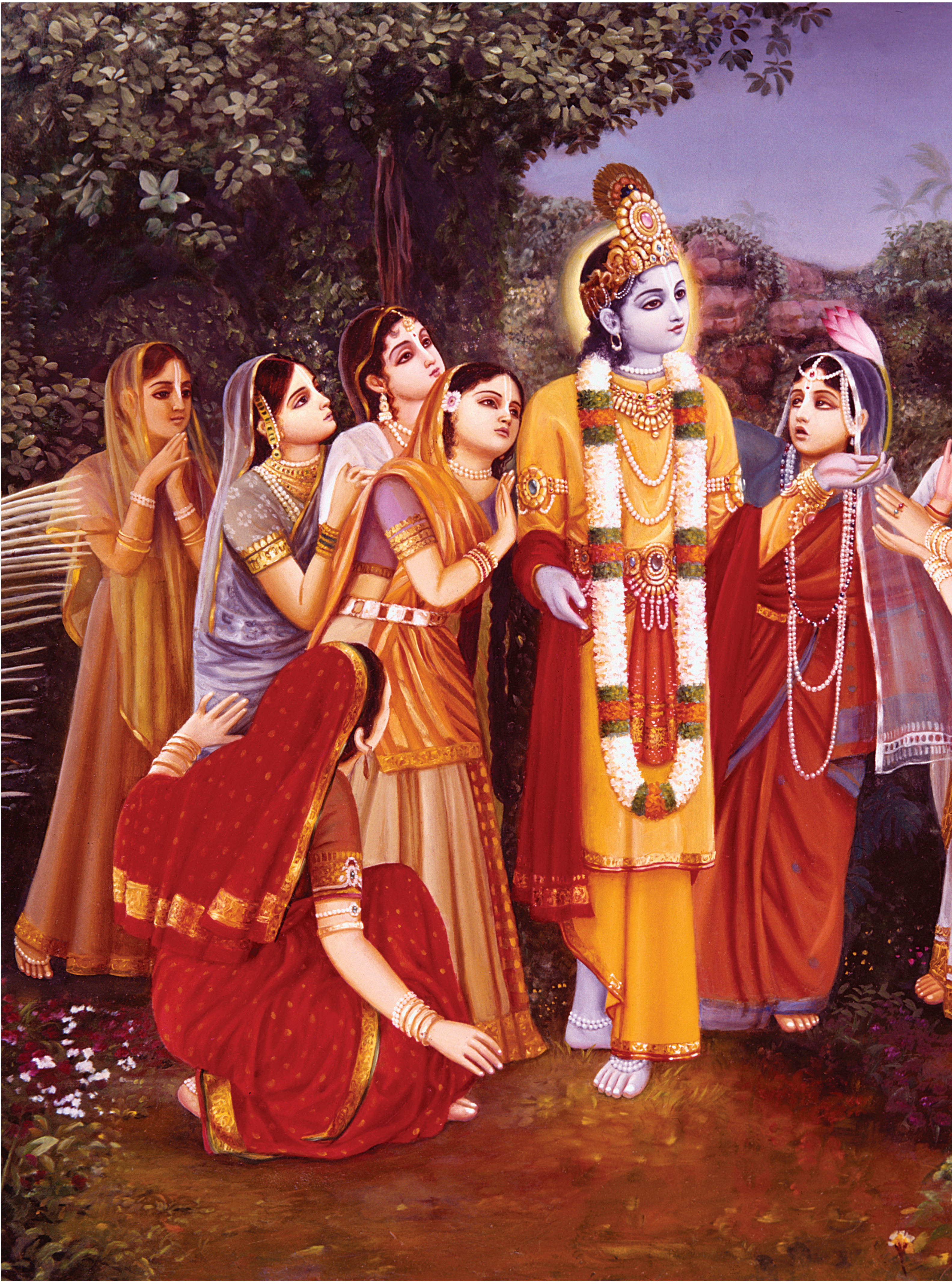
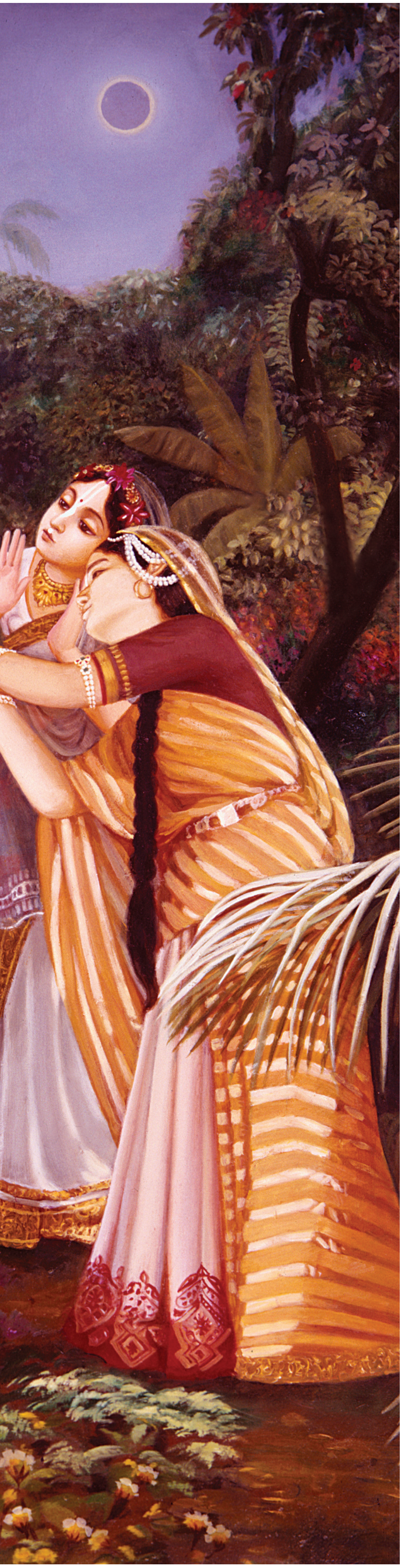
I live in Kenya, Hare Krsna to the world !!





Detail from a painting by Yadurāṇī Devī Dāsī

The cowherd girls of Vṛndāvana exhibit the deepest attraction to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and their lives revolve only around Him.

FOUNDER'S LECTURE

Sanand, India—December 27, 1975

INCREASING OUR ATTACHMENT FOR KṚṢṆA

Success in life comes when we direct our love back to its true object: Lord Kṛṣṇa.

by His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society
For Krishna Consciousness

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
mayy āsakta-manāḥ pārtha
yogaṁ yuñjan mad-āśrayaḥ
asaṁśayaṁ samagraṁ māṁ
yathā jñāsyasi tac chṛṇu

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Now hear, O son of Pṛthā, how by practicing yoga in full consciousness of Me, with mind attached to Me, you can know Me in full, free from doubt."
—*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.1

IF YOU LEARN from the supreme authority without any deficiency, then the knowledge is perfect. Ordinary persons have four deficiencies: they commit mistakes, they are in illusion, their senses are imperfect, and with imperfect knowledge they try to teach others about the ultimate truth—that is cheating. We have to receive knowledge from the person who knows past, present, and future. So the best persons from whom to receive knowledge are Kṛṣṇa and His representatives. Kṛṣṇa is perfect, no doubt, and one who speaks what Kṛṣṇa speaks is also perfect. A human being, or a living being, is not expected to become as perfect as Kṛṣṇa. That is not possible. But if a person sticks to the instructions of Kṛṣṇa, without addition or alteration, he is also perfect.

Unfortunately, people alter and add to Kṛṣṇa's version. So-called scholars and politicians misinterpret *Bhagavad-gītā*. For example, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (1.1) it is said, *dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ*:

“Assembled to fight in the place of pilgrimage at Kurukshetra . . .” Somebody interprets, “This *dharma-kṣetra* is this body.” Why should one interpret in that way? Interpretation is required when things are not very clear. Kurukshetra still exists. People go to Kurukshetra to execute religious rituals. And in the *Vedas* it is stated, *kuru-kṣetre dharmam ācaret:* “One should go to Kurukshetra to perform religious acts.” Why should *dharma-kṣetra* be interpreted as “body”? Where is the dictionary where *dharma-kṣetra* means “body”?

If we interpret Bhagavad-gītā then we spoil the whole thing. We should accept Bhagavad-gītā as it is.

If we interpret *Bhagavad-gītā,* then we spoil the whole thing. I spoil myself and others. We should accept *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is—as it is spoken by Kṛṣṇa.

Here the Supreme Personality of Godhead is speaking. So we should take it without any interpretation. Kṛṣṇa, the supreme authority, says, “You must transfer your *āsakti,* attachment, to Me.” Everyone has *āsakti,* material attachment. Someone is attached to his family, someone to society, someone to nation, someone to business—so many things. We have *āsakti,* but to make our life perfect, we have to transfer the *āsakti* to Kṛṣṇa. I have seen in the Western countries that many people have no family but because the *āsakti* is there, they keep a dog. They are accustomed to place their *āsakti* in cats and dogs. That means that *āsakti* does not go away. But we must transfer that *āsakti,* that tendency of attachment, to Kṛṣṇa.

That is Vṛndāvana life. In Vṛndāvana the center of *āsakti* is Kṛṣṇa. Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā have *āsakti* for Kṛṣṇa. The young girls have *āsakti* for Kṛṣṇa. The cowherd boys have *āsakti* for Kṛṣṇa. The trees have *āsakti* for Kṛṣṇa. The fruits and flowers have *āsakti* for Kṛṣṇa. The Yamuna River has *āsakti* for Kṛṣṇa. If we make Kṛṣṇa our central point of *āsakti,* then we can create Vṛndāvana everywhere.

This is the success of life. We have to transfer our *āsakti* to Kṛṣṇa. That is the highest form of mystic yoga. Kṛṣṇa has already explained in the previous verse:

yoginām api sarveṣāṁ
mad-gatenāntarātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo māṁ
sa me yuktatamo mataḥ

There are many yogis and many forms of yoga practice, but the yogi who always thinks of Kṛṣṇa is the first-class yogi.

Kṛṣṇa Draws Our Attention

Our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement aims to educate people to become attached to Kṛṣṇa. But if one does not know what Kṛṣṇa is, there is no question of increasing one’s *āsakti* for Kṛṣṇa. So to help us understand Him, Kṛṣṇa personally appears to draw our attention to Him. When we forget our *āsakti* for Kṛṣṇa, that causes our material life; we struggle for existence in material life. Kṛṣṇa says [Bg. 4.7],

yadā yadā hi dharmasya
glānir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthānam adharmasya
tadātmānaṁ sṛjāmy aham

Dharmasya glāni means deviation from the occupational duty. When we deviate from our duties toward Kṛṣṇa, out of His causeless mercy He appears to teach us how to divert our attention and *āsakti* to Him. *Dharmasya glāni*—deviation from the path of religion—means to forget our eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Therefore ultimately—at the end of the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.66)—Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person, orders, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja:* “Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me.” Kṛṣṇa did not come to establish so-called Hindu dharma or Muslim dharma or Christian dharma or this dharma or that dharma. He came to establish the real dharma: to surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [1.1.2] cheating types of dharma are kicked out. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains real dharma as established by Kṛṣṇa. *Sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja:* “Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me.” According to some scriptures on dharma, one should progress from dharma (religion) to *artha* (economic development) to *kāma* (sense gratification) and finally to *mokṣa* (liberation).

In this connection Śrīdhara Swami, the great commentator on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* says, *atra mokṣa-vāñchā api nirasta:* “In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there is no chance or opportunity to think of so-called liberation.” The purport is that one immediately becomes liberated when one fully surrenders to Kṛṣṇa. Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura says, *muktiḥ svayaṁ mukulitāñjali sevate ’smān:* Why should a devotee be anxious for *mukti,* liberation; *mukti* is always standing at his door, ready to give him service—*mukulitāñjali-sevā,* with folded hands.

A devotee doesn’t have to endeavor separately for *mukti.* As soon as the devotee is engaged in devotional service, *mukti* is already there. If a man becomes rich, automatically his poverty is gone away. A rich man does not have to endeavor separately to drive away poverty. So the central point is that Kṛṣṇa is advising here, “Just increase your *āsakti,* attachment, for Me. Then everything will come.”

The word *mad-āśrayaḥ* in this verse is very important, because you cannot increase your attachment for Kṛṣṇa without being *mad-āśrayaḥ. Mad-āśrayaḥ* means to be directly under the direction of Kṛṣṇa or to be directly under the direction of somebody who has taken shelter of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore Kṛṣṇa recommends *mad-āśrayaḥ.* You cannot execute the yoga system—devotional service, *bhakti-yoga*—without being under the control of somebody who is under the control of Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī has therefore recommended, *yad upāśrayāśraya.* One has to take shelter of a pure devotee; then he becomes purified.

kirāta-hūṇāndhra-pulinda-pulkaśā
ābhīra-śumbhā yavanāḥ
khasādayaḥ
ye 'nye ca pāpā yad-apāśrayāśrayāḥ
śudhyanti tasmai prabhaviṣṇave
namaḥ

"Kirāta, Hūṇa, Āndhra, Pulinda, Pulkaśa, Ābhīra, Śumbha, Yavana, members of the Khasa races, and even others addicted to sinful acts can be purified by taking shelter of the devotees of the Lord, due to His being the supreme power. I beg to offer my respectful obeisances unto Him." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.4.18] Even persons considered lowborn can be purified if they take shelter of a pure devotee. Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.32),

māṁ hi pārtha vyapāśritya
ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ
striya vaiśyās tathā śūdrās
te 'pi yānti parāṁ gatim

"Anyone, even if lowborn, gets the supreme perfection if he takes shelter of Me."

It is the duty of a devotee of Kṛṣṇa to expand the progressive march toward devotional service. Otherwise, how will people learn? This expansion is *para-upakāra,* welfare work, and it is Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission:

bhārata-bhūmite haila
manuṣya janma yāra
janma sārthaka kari kara
para-upakāra

[*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi* 9.41]

"Every human being born in India should first of all make his life successful by understanding Kṛṣṇa, and then he must preach outside to render service to others as welfare activities."

Kṛṣṇa appeared as Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach us practically how to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness and how to deliver lowborn persons. Śrī Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, an *ācārya* of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, Caitanya Mahāprabhu's spiritual lineage, sings, *śrī-nanda-nandana yei, śacī-suta haila sei:* "Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead who appeared as the son of Mahārāja Nanda, has now appeared as Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the son of Mother Śacī." And *balarāma haila nitāi:* "Balarāma has appeared as Nityānanda Prabhu." Now, what is Their business? Narottama sings: *dīna-hīna yata chilo, hari-nāme uddhārilo, tāra śākṣī jagāi mādhāi.* He is giving evidence how the fallen are delivered. "Here is the example Jagāi and Mādhāi." Jagāi and Mādhāi were born in a good *brāhmaṇa* family, but by bad association they became drunkards, thieves, woman-hunters, and so on. But they were delivered by Caitanya Mahāprabhu and became first-class Vaiṣṇavas.

The Attachment Is Dormant

Our aim should be to increase our attachment to Kṛṣṇa. That attachment is there naturally. It is not artificial. It is said in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 22.107),

nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema
'sādhya' kabhu naya
śravaṇādi-śuddha-citte
karaye udaya

Kṛṣṇa-bhakti, attachment for Kṛṣṇa, is quite natural. It is already there. It simply has to be awakened.

If you engage yourself in hearing about Kṛṣṇa, then your heart will be purified and your original Kṛṣṇa

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on a great ancient tradition rooted in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the teachings Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke five millennia ago. The *Gītā* and the other Vedic scriptures declare Kṛṣṇa to be the original person, God Himself, who appears periodically in this world to liberate all living beings.

Only five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the most sublime and effective means of meditation for the present day: the chanting of the names of God, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Today members of ISKCON continue Lord Caitanya's movement by distributing the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in b**u**t, long **ā** like the **a** in f**a**r (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in ev**a**de, long **ī** like the **i** in p**i**que. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **ri**m, and **c** like the **ch** in **ch**air. Pronounce consonants like **ch, jh,** and **dh** as in staun**ch-h**eart, hed**ge-h**og, and re**d-h**ot. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh.** So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

Spiritual Names

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or his great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean "servant." For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

consciousness will be awakened. For this purpose Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu also advises, *paraṁ vijāyate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam:* "All glories to the *saṅkīrtana* movement," because simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra everything will automatically come. The more you chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra,* the more your heart disease—material enjoyment—will decrease. Then you will understand your position and you will gradually be attracted by Kṛṣṇa.

This is the test of *bhakti:* If you engage yourself twenty-four hours a day in devotional service, then immediately you become liberated. Liberation means to detest material enjoyment.

Attachment to Kṛṣṇa is so nice. In the beginning Dhruva Mahārāja was attracted by material enjoyment. He wanted a kingdom greater than his father's, and to get that benediction he went to the forest to meet the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But when he saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he refused to accept any benediction. That is the benefit of Kṛṣṇa *āsakti.* If you actually become attached to Kṛṣṇa, then you'll think yourself completely filled up. There will be no more asking for any material benefit.

Therefore in the scripture it is recommended,

akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā
mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ
tīvreṇa bhakti-yogena
yajeta puruṣaṁ param

[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.10]

Even if you have material desires, if you are attached to Kṛṣṇa your material aspirations will be fulfilled; at the same time, you'll get Kṛṣṇa.

When Dhruva Mahārāja refused to take any benediction, Lord Viṣṇu informed him, "Don't bother. You had some desire for material fulfillment, so you may have your own planet, Dhruvaloka. Enjoy there, and when your life is finished you'll come to Vaikuṇṭha, the spiritual world."

Liberal Kṛṣṇa

Kṛṣṇa is so nice, so liberal, that if you have a little tinge of aspiration He will fulfill it, and at the same time you'll go back to Godhead. Therefore it is recommended, *yajeta puruṣa param.* If you have some material desire, still you should worship Kṛṣṇa. He'll fulfill your desire, and you will be able to go back home, back to Godhead.

Kṛṣṇa is all-powerful, almighty, full with six opulences. So if you have any material desire, Kṛṣṇa can fulfill it, but stick to Kṛṣṇa so that your *āsakti* will increase. If you divert your attention to the demigods, then your *āsakti* will fail.

A devotee who places his faith in Kṛṣṇa has no chance to worship demigods. A devotee of Kṛṣṇa has no scope for worshiping some other Deity, because that will not help him increase his attachment for Kṛṣṇa. We have to give up all material desires and simply stick to Kṛṣṇa, to always be ready to serve Him. Arjuna was ready to serve Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, everyone should be ready to serve Kṛṣṇa. That is the perfection of life.

One has to execute the process of devotional service. As Kṛṣṇa says, *mad-āśraya:* "Take shelter of Me or My devotee." In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa is personally instructing. So let us take shelter of His personal instructions and make our life successful.

As it is said here, a pure devotee understands Kṛṣṇa *asaṁśayaṁ samagram:* not partially but fully. It is, of course, not possible to understand Kṛṣṇa fully. Still, a devotee can understand Kṛṣṇa almost fully. That is also confirmed in the last chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā:*

bhaktyā mām abhijānāti
yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ
tato māṁ tattvato jñātvā
viśate tad-anantaram

"One can understand Me as I am, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of Me by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God." [Bg. 18.55] If we want to go back home, back to Godhead, then we must increase our attachment for Kṛṣṇa, and by that process we can understand Kṛṣṇa. Then our door to go back home, back to Godhead, is clear. The conclusion is, therefore, that we should take to the *bhakti* process as it is enunciated in authoritative scripture by Kṛṣṇa and the *ācāryas. Sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja:* "Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto me." [Bg. 18.66]. That is the only way for our perfection of life.

Thank you very much.

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Glossary

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Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.

Balarāma—Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.

Battle of Kurukshetra—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.

Bhagavad-gītā—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna.

Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Bhakti-yoga—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.

Darśana—"viewing," audience with a deity or saintly person.

Dharma—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one's eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).

Godhead—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.

Gurukula—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally "the place of the guru").

Hare Kṛṣṇa—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

ISKCON—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Japa—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.

Kali-yuga—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.

Karma—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed.

Kīrtana—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendental form (see "Godhead").

Mahābhārata—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.

Māyā—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual nature and forgetting God.

Māyāvādī—one who regards the Abs ultimately impersonal.

Modes of nature—the three qualities (goo and ignorance) that hold sway over all action in the material world.

Nityānanda—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prasādam—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to Him with devotion (literally "mercy").

Purāṇas—Vedic histories.

Rādhārāṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort and pleasure potency.

Rathayātrā—"chariot festival": a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Puri, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, "the Lord of the universe").

Sannyāsa—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.

Śrī—an honorific meaning "opulent" (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).

Śrīla Prabhupāda—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas,* which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

Supersoul—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.

Upaniṣads—the 108 essential philosophical treatises that appear within the *Vedas.*

Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).

Varṇāśrama—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).

Vedas—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.

Vedic—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.

Viṣṇu—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see "Godhead"); the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.

Vṛndāvana—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.

7 Stages of Purification

Lord Caitanya describes the many blessings obtained by chanting the holy names of the Lord.

by Rādhānātha Swami

THE FIRST VERSE of Lord Caitanya's *Śikśāṣṭakam* ("Eight Instructions") describes the seven tongues of the flame of the sacrifice of chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy names. Lord Caitanya explains how seven stages of transcendental purification and elevation take place when we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Removing the Dust

Lord Caitanya begins, *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam:* the congregational chanting of the holy names of the Lord cleanses the mirror of our consciousness. Originally we are all pure Kṛṣṇa conscious entities. The soul is part of the supreme soul, Kṛṣṇa. Pure love of Kṛṣṇa in ecstatic bliss is within the heart of every living being. The function of the mirror of our consciousness is to reflect the true identity and nature of our own self. When we look in the mirror, we do not expect to see someone else.

The soul is unlimitedly beautiful, because it is qualitatively one with Kṛṣṇa, the supreme beauty. Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that one spark of His beauty creates all the things in material existence that intoxicate us with illusory pleasure. Still, the beauty of one infinitesimal *jīvātmā* (soul) within any species of life has more qualitative beauty and enchantment than all the things within the entire cosmic manifestation. We cannot even imagine the beauty of the soul.

When we look into the mirror of our consciousness, we are supposed to see the reflection of our self. But somehow our consciousness has been covered with layers and layers of dust that has accumulated birth after birth after birth. And so we cannot see who we are or what we are meant to be. All we see is that dust.

The dust is all of our selfish, egoistic desires to enjoy material existence. It is lust dust. We have so many aspirations for how we will enjoy. We are intoxicated by the illusory phantasmagoria of the so-called beautiful things of this world, which are compared to mirages. We chase after these mirages birth after birth, looking for happiness but finding no real satisfaction.

Unfulfilled, we often become angry and frustrated. Our selfish desires are not satisfied, so we want to blame someone or something. And we make so many offenses. If somehow or other we get a little bit of pleasure in the material world,

we are dissatisfied. We want more and more. So we fall prey to greed, another species of dust.

Kṛṣṇa explains that lust is just like fire. The more fuel you put in, the hungrier it becomes. The more you have, the more you become greedy for more. And if somehow or other someone has something you want or something more than what you want, then the dust of envy manifests. You become hateful of that person. You wish and pray that the person will lose everything and suffer. You become envious. "Why do you have those things? Why not me? I deserve them."

And through all of this—lust, anger, envy—we become proud of whatever little we have; we think we are very great. And we're in illusion, which drives us mad.

So our false ego, or our desire to enjoy, and all its byproducts and the reactions to our attempts to enjoy are the types of dust that cover the mirror of the soul.

Sometimes less intelligent people, frustrated in so many ways with dissatisfaction of all their pursuits in material life, take to a process of religion to be liberated by becoming God. That is another type of dust.

The first stage of chanting the holy names of the Lord is the removal of all this dust from the mirror of the mind.

Extinguishing the Fire

The next stage is *bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpanam:* chanting the holy names extinguishes the forest fire of material suffering. This world, Kṛṣṇa says, is essentially a place of suffering. We are trying to be happy in a place of suffering. It is just like trying to be dry when you are submerged in the ocean. If you want to get dry, you have to get out of the ocean. So if you want to enjoy, you need to get out of this material existence.

All you have to do to get out of material existence is to want to get out. Chant and go back to Godhead. The only thing that keeps us here is our desire to stay here. And *māyā* gives us these few tokens of happiness, just so we can feel, “Oh, I like it here. It’s worth all these miseries and sufferings, death after death. Just to get some nice food or touch some soft object or watch some television. It is worth it!” In this way *māyā* keeps us in this miserable situation.

Material existence is compared to a burning forest fire. What can extinguish a burning forest fire? No fire brigade has any hope. Only by the power of God, when He sends rain showers, is it possible. The chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa is like that rainstorm. What is impossible for us to do individually or even collectively as human society—extinguish a forest fire—can be done by Kṛṣṇa’s mercy alone.

As a night lotus blossoms in the light of the full moon, the soul blossoms in the rays of the holy name.

A fire millions of times greater and more intense than an uncontrollable forest fire is burning within our hearts. And the flames of that fire implicate us in the three miseries of material existence. The first is miseries of our own body and mind. The body has so many inconveniences and discomforts. Take disease, for example. One little creature enters your body and can causes so much misery. Then there are miseries of the mind—anxiety, distress, lamentation, disappointment. So many tears flow from the eyes due to these miseries.

And there are miseries caused by others, such as our brothers and sisters, our families, our husbands or wives. Politicians, insects—so many other living beings create suffering for the conditioned soul.

Natural disturbances also create miseries. Too much heat, too much cold, too much rain, too little rain. In the material world too much or too little of anything and you suffer. Everything has to be just right for any relief or happiness. When there is a drought we pray for rain; when there is a flood we pray for drought. “Let the rain come. No, no, I changed my mind; let the rain stop.” When it is too hot we pray, “Let there be a nice breeze.” And then a frigid cyclone comes and—“No, no, I changed my mind. I don’t want this breeze. Let it be hot.” The dualities of material existence are always there. Earthquakes, volcanoes, cyclones. These are all miseries of material nature.

In the second stage of chanting the holy name, Kṛṣṇa’s mercy flows as a reciprocation, just like a rainstorm, completely extinguishing the blazing forest fire of material existence. We achieve freedom in the sense that we are forever delivered from all suffering from material existence.

The Benediction Moon

The next stage is *śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇam.* We have cleansed the mirror-heart of all the dirt of material attachment. We have extinguished the blazing forest fire of material existence, the cause of all miseries, and now our actual blissful spiritual nature begins to awaken.

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu compares the holy name to a beautiful full moon. The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is Kṛṣṇa. The holy name radiates an oceanic quantity and quality of benedictions. As a night lotus blossoms in the light of the full moon, the soul blossoms in the rays of the holy name.

When the lotus is closed, its fragrance and beauty cannot be enjoyed. But when the lotus comes in contact with moonlight, it blossoms, and all of its fragrance and beauty are manifested to the world. When the holy name touches our hearts, it awakens the natural, beautiful loving qualities of our souls. And we realize our own spiritual existence in our relationship with Kṛṣṇa. As that relationship develops, it manifests in five *rasas,* or spiritual tastes: in a neutral relationship with the Lord, as a servant of the Lord, as a friend of the Lord, as a parent of the Lord, or as a lover of the Lord.

Real Knowledge

The next stage Lord Caitanya describes is *vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam.* When the lotus of our soul blossoms, we gain real knowledge of who we are. We know that our real purpose is to surrender completely to the will of God. To the degree we surrender, we feel ecstasy. To the degree we are complacent or reluctant or we refuse to surrender to the will of Kṛṣṇa, to the service of Kṛṣṇa, we are cheating ourselves of the nectar of transcendental love, our eternal birthright. Complete surrender is the expression of knowledge of the true nature of our self, the soul.

In the material sense, surrender means to give up, against our will, and it is a miserable idea. When you are fighting a war, you want the other side to surrender. Nobody likes to surrender. It means you lose everything. In the spiritual sense, it is just the opposite.

Actually, you are surrendering at all times. It is just a question of whom you are surrendering to, because everyone is in a subordinate position in the material world. We have the independent free will to surrender to either Kṛṣṇa’s spiritual energy or His material energy.

Every time you desire to see or taste or hear something material, you are surrendering to material nature. When we surrender to *māyā,* every time we surrender to any of our desires we plunge deeper and deeper into the blazing fire.

The only means to be free from the power of *māyā* is to surrender to Kṛṣṇa, the all-good, all-beautiful reservoir of all pleasure. Why are we reluctant to surrender to Kṛṣṇa? Because we are habituated to surrendering to *māyā.* To surrender to Kṛṣṇa is the easiest, simplest, most natural thing. But we have become so unnatural in our thinking, feeling, and willing that it appears to be very difficult. Still, through the power of the holy name—as the dust of our heart becomes cleansed, as the forest fire of material existence and the suffering of our actions and reactions of sinful activities are extinguished, as the true knowledge in the lotus of our hearts becomes revealed—surrendering to Kṛṣṇa becomes our very nature. Surrender means to love Kṛṣṇa, to serve Kṛṣṇa. The expression of love is to serve.

Expanding Ocean of Bliss

The next stage that Lord Caitanya explains is *ānandāmbuddhi-vardhanam*: when we surrender to Kṛṣṇa, when we agree within our heart to live in harmony with Him and be the servant of the servant of His servants, then by His grace He places us in an unlimited ocean of transcendental ecstasy. The happiness of this world is like a drop of water in the desert. But the happiness achieved through the chanting of the holy name is like being submerged in an ocean of nectar, an ocean of ecstasy.

The soul is longing for the unlimited ecstatic joy of reuniting with Kṛṣṇa. Once we see the beauty of Kṛṣṇa, then we are aware that the things of this world that charm our heart are insignificant, irrelevant. When we realize we are not this body, we know there is nothing so great about material pleasure. It has nothing to do with the soul and reality.

In our unpurified state, when we see a beautiful thing it is just some light entering into our eye, but it makes us crazy. Or some sound frequency enters our ears, and we get crazy. Something scrapes our tongue—what is the tongue but a lump of flesh wiggling around? But when something touches its surface, we go mad. That is what material enjoyment is, and we take it so seriously.

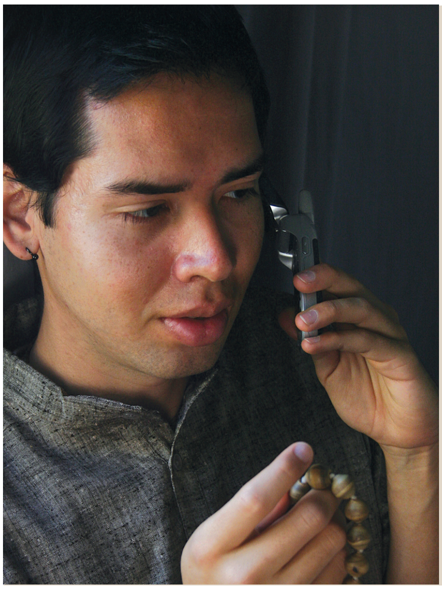
But one little glimpse of the beauty and charm of Kṛṣṇa will completely take our minds forever from this material existence. The supreme power of Kṛṣṇa is not in creating the material world but in displaying His all-attractive beauty, which charms the hearts of all His living entities for all of eternity. One drop of love for Kṛṣṇa can conquer the entire universe in a second. All that power, all that beauty, all the love, and all the opulences are within His name. And when that name enters our heart, all aspirations and desires for anything but the service of that name cease to exist.

Purifying Pleasure

The next aspect of chanting is *sarvātma-snapanam.* Kṛṣṇa conscious pleasure is very different from the pleasures of the material world. The pleasures of the material world pollute us. The more pleasure we get, the more our hearts are polluted with the misconception that we are the enjoyer. But the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa consciousness purifies us. The more we are happy in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the more purified we become.

Enjoyment from chanting and hearing the names and glories of the Lord completely purifies our heart. Not even the seeds and weeds of material enjoyment are left. Sometimes when we cut down weeds, it appears that everything is safe. But the seeds are still in the ground, and it is just a matter of time before they grow again. The holy name has the power to completely purify us, to the extent that even the seeds of material

(*please turn to page 38*)



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In your own

Describe an incident in your life where you clearly felt Kṛṣṇa's dir

I'm a twenty-two-year-old student, and although I don't really consider myself a devotee yet, I feel strongly about Kṛṣṇa. I love to read about Him, listen to *bhajanas,* and play songs about Him on my guitar.

Last Janmāṣṭamī I finally decided to go to a Kṛṣṇa temple for the first time. On that special day, my friend and I visited the jam-packed ISKCON Mumbai temple. For crowd control, there were only two ways to enter. I couldn't afford the first, which was for special donors only, and the second required a pass, which I didn't have.

I didn't try to slip in, opting instead to take the Lord's blessings from outside. I focused my mind on Kṛṣṇa.

Suddenly a couple approached my friend and me and told us we could use their passes. Thanking them profusely, we entered and soon found ourselves in front of the Lord and surrounded by devotees. I was shocked, as I had thought it would be impossible for a stranger like me to get in. I knew then that Kṛṣṇa had touched my life and helped me gain His audience.

Vikram Shekhawat
Mumbai, India

Every year during ISKCON's Jagannātha Rathayātrā in Hyderabad, my husband was able to donate only 516 rupees. This year I asked him to give 5,116 rupees. I remembered him telling me he'd helped a friend a year ago, and I suggested he ask this friend to repay the debt. I told my husband to ask for 10,000 rupees, so that his friend would give us at least 5,000. My husband refused. But the next day, the friend arrived at our house uninvited and gave us 10,000 rupees.

My husband hadn't mentioned his friend's name before, so it came as a bit of a shock.

"Pleased to meet you," he said, introducing himself to me. "My name is Jagannatha Reddy."

Meenakshi Veerapaneni
Hyderabad, India

Yamarāja Dāsa

ISKCON Mumbai Deities, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī

words . . .

Pentip photographer: Andrea Leone | Agency: Dreamstime.com

ect involvement.

On a recent visit to Guyana.

I was traveling in a van full of devotees. Everyone was in an ecstatic mood, as one devotee was speaking of her first visit to Vṛndāvana Dhāma. None of us had ever been there. We were running late, and our driver was speeding. Suddenly, he lost control of the vehicle. The van skidded and fell into a roll. It flipped over three times before crashing into a river. Everyone's first reaction was to start screaming, but my mother shouted, "No, chant!"

We began to chant Kṛṣṇa's name loudly. Our driver managed to force open the door, because luckily it was the dry season and the river was not full. Local villagers came running, expecting to count the dead bodies, but one by one, all the devotees emerged unharmed. It was a terrible accident, but because we had been hearing about Kṛṣṇa's holy abode and chanting His name, we were all saved without even a scratch. Still trembling, we understood that Lord Kṛṣṇa had protected us all.

Rādhā Govinda Dāsī
Colon, Panama

Some years ago, I was walking past a sweet shop

when I spotted a display of huge *rasgulas,* those white juicy sweets full of syrup. My taste buds became rampant with excitement. I could almost feel the taste of a *rasgula* in my mouth, so I bought one. But it was Sunday and I was on my way to the Śrī Śrī Gaura Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Temple, so I decided I must first offer the *rasgula* to the Lord.

I took the *rasgula* to the temple, and to my utter surprise, the moment it was being offered by the temple priest to the Lord, I felt a deep satisfaction. And I never again craved *rasgulas* so much. I now understand that if we satisfy the Lord, we also become satisfied.

Prem Prakash Pathak
Lucknow, India

It was Christmas-time 1978, and I was with a group of devotees

distributing Prabhupāda's books in Cardiff, Wales. Two men who had taken a book wanted their money back. They found the devotee who had sold it to them near his books in an alley.

They were about to attack him when Satyavāka Dāsa burst into the alley and chanted loudly, "Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu *kī jaya*!"

Then something mystical happened: The two men stopped talking, became almost docile, and decided to keep the book and give a donation.

Navadvīpa Dāsa
Harper Woods, Michigan

I have been trying to become Kṛṣṇa conscious

in the last few months. My wife, speaking from her ignorance and prejudice about ISKCON, said she would divorce me and take my children if I would not give it up. I prayed to Kṛṣṇa, asking Him to show me how I could serve Him under such circumstances.

After a few tense days, my wife began feeling guilty that she had given me an ultimatum. She realized that after seventeen years of marriage, she couldn't treat me like this. Now I can keep my family together and still search for my own spirituality. I know Kṛṣṇa did this for me, because my wife has never before given in so easily to something she is so against. Kṛṣṇa made the arrangement, and I am totally grateful and devoted to serving Him. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Jed Peretz
Castle Rock, Colorado

One day in 1974, barely out of my teens,

I was hitchhiking home for the weekend. I stood on the side of the road for hours, not helped by a particularly bad case of stomach cramps. Finally, a young man about my age picked me up. As I got into his car, George Harrison's "My Sweet Lord" began playing on the car radio. Soon we were discussing spiritual life, and for the next hour we shared spiritual realizations.

When he dropped me off, I suddenly felt the terrible cramps again. I realized that discussing topics of Kṛṣṇa had lifted me clean out of my bodily conception. I had been interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness for some time, but now I was even more convinced that this was real transcendental life. Four weeks later, I joined the ISKCON temple in Ottowa.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Dāsa
Toronto, Canada

HERE'S THE NEXT QUESTION:

Which day on the Vaiṣṇava calendar has special significance for you, and why?

Go to Krishna.com/inyourownwords and let us know. Please keep your answer to under 150 words. Replies will appear in our July/August issue. Deadline for submissions is April 15.

CALENDAR

*This calendar is calculated for Māyāpur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. For the exact dates for your area, go to **www.krishna.com/calendar**.*

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in His disciplic succession.

February 22–March 21

(*Month of Govinda*)

March

3—Vijayā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

4—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Īśvara Purī, Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

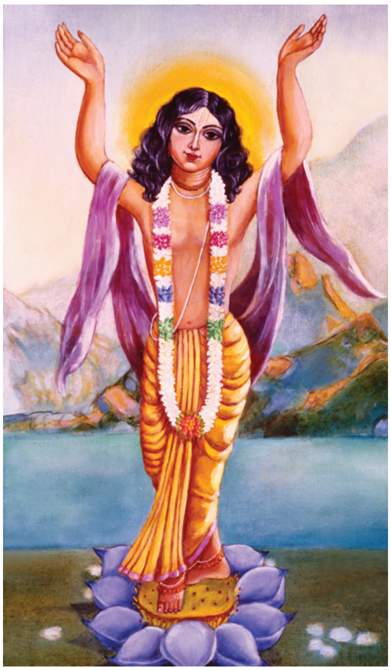
6—Śrī Śiva Rātri, a day in honor of Lord Śiva.

8—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī, the great devotee in the disciplic line from Lord Caitanya who confirmed Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's discovery of Lord Caitanya's birthplace.

17—Amalakī-vrata Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

18—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

21—Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā, the appearance anniversary of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of His own devotee. Fasting till moonrise, followed by a breakfast of Ekādaśī *prasādam* (no grains or beans). Feasting tomorrow.



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

March 22–April 20

(*Month of Viṣṇu*)

30—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's principal associates.

April

2—Pāpamocanī Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

10—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, a Vaiṣṇava spiritual master who appeared in the eleventh century.

14—Śrī Rāma Navamī, the appearance anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra. Fasting till sunset, then feasting.

16—Kāmadā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

20—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Vasanta Rāsa, Lord Kṛṣṇa's springtime *rāsa* dance. Balarāma Rāsa Yātrā, Lord Balarāma's *rāsa* dance. Appearance anniversary of Hanumānjī, eternal servant of Lord Rāma. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita, a follower of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

April 21–May 20

(*Month of Madhusūdana*)

May

1—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, the author of *Śrī Caitanya-Bhāgavata,* a biography on Lord Caitanya.

2—Varūthinī Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

5—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's principal associates.

8—Beginning of Candana Yātrā, the festival of anointing temple deities with sandalwood pulp for twenty-one days.

13—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Lord Rāmacandra. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Jāhnavā Devī, the consort of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhu Paṇḍita, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

15—Mohinī Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

16—Rukmiṇī Dvādaśī, the appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī Devī, the consort of Lord Kṛṣṇa as Dvārakādhīśa, the Lord of Dvārakā.

17—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayānanda Prabhu, a dedicated disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda who helped him bring the Rathayātrā festival to the Western world.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

The Quest to Create Life

This exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and his disciple Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Swami, Ph.D., took place in Atlanta during March of 1975.

Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Swami: Modern scientists are working very hard to create life in the laboratory.
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Try to understand this. Just as God already exists, so the living entities, being part of God, also already exist—eternally. So you haven't got to "create." That is foolishness, because the living entities are eternal—they are never created. They simply become manifest in the material world in four ways. Some of them are manifested through seeds, some of them through fermentation, some through eggs, and some through embryos. But the living entities already exist, so there is no question of "creation." This is the science of the living entity.

There are already so many millions and trillions of living entities, and yet the materialistic scientists are holding big conferences on how to create something. Just see this childish proposal. They are wasting time, misleading people, and wasting everyone's hard-earned money. Therefore I say they are rascals. They are trying to "create." What will they create? Everything is already there. But they do not know this, even with all their advanced education. Therefore, the *Bhagavad-gītā* describes them as *mūḍhās,* rascals.

Now, you tell these *mūḍhās,* "My dear sir, you cannot create, nor can anything be created. Just find out where the living entities are coming from, what is their source, who is the brain behind all of nature. Find that out. That is real knowledge. If you struggle for this knowledge and try to find the original source of everything, then some day you may come to the platform of *vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ:* you'll understand that God is the source of everything, and your knowledge will be perfect."

Look at this nice flower—do you think it has come out automatically, without the direction of any brain? This is nonsensical philosophy. These so-called scientists use so many bombastic words, but how much are they actually explaining? Nobody else can understand, only them. They put forth some complicated language in such a way that unless they explain it, nobody will understand. They say that everything is automatically done "by nature." That's not the fact.

Nature is an instrument, just like a wonderful computer. But still there is an operator. These rascals have no common sense. Where is the machine that is working without any operator? Is there such a machine within their experience? How can they suggest that nature is working automatically? Nature is a wonderful machine, but the operator is God, Kṛṣṇa. That is real knowledge. Just because the machine is working very wonderfully, does that mean there is no operator? For example, the harmonium is also a machine, and if an expert musician is playing it, then it produces very melodious, pleasing sounds. "Oh, how nice." But will the harmonium play automatically and give out melodious sounds? So they don't even have any common sense, and still they are calling themselves scientists. That is our regret—that these people don't even have any common sense, and still they are passing as scientists.
Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Swami: They are thinking that because through chemistry they are able to synthesize some primitive amino acids . . .
Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is craftsmanship; that is not knowledge. For instance, let us say that you paint a picture of a rose. You are a painter—not a man of knowledge. "Man of knowledge" means someone who knows how things are

(*please turn to page 58*)

Checkmate!

ISKCON's Victory in Russia

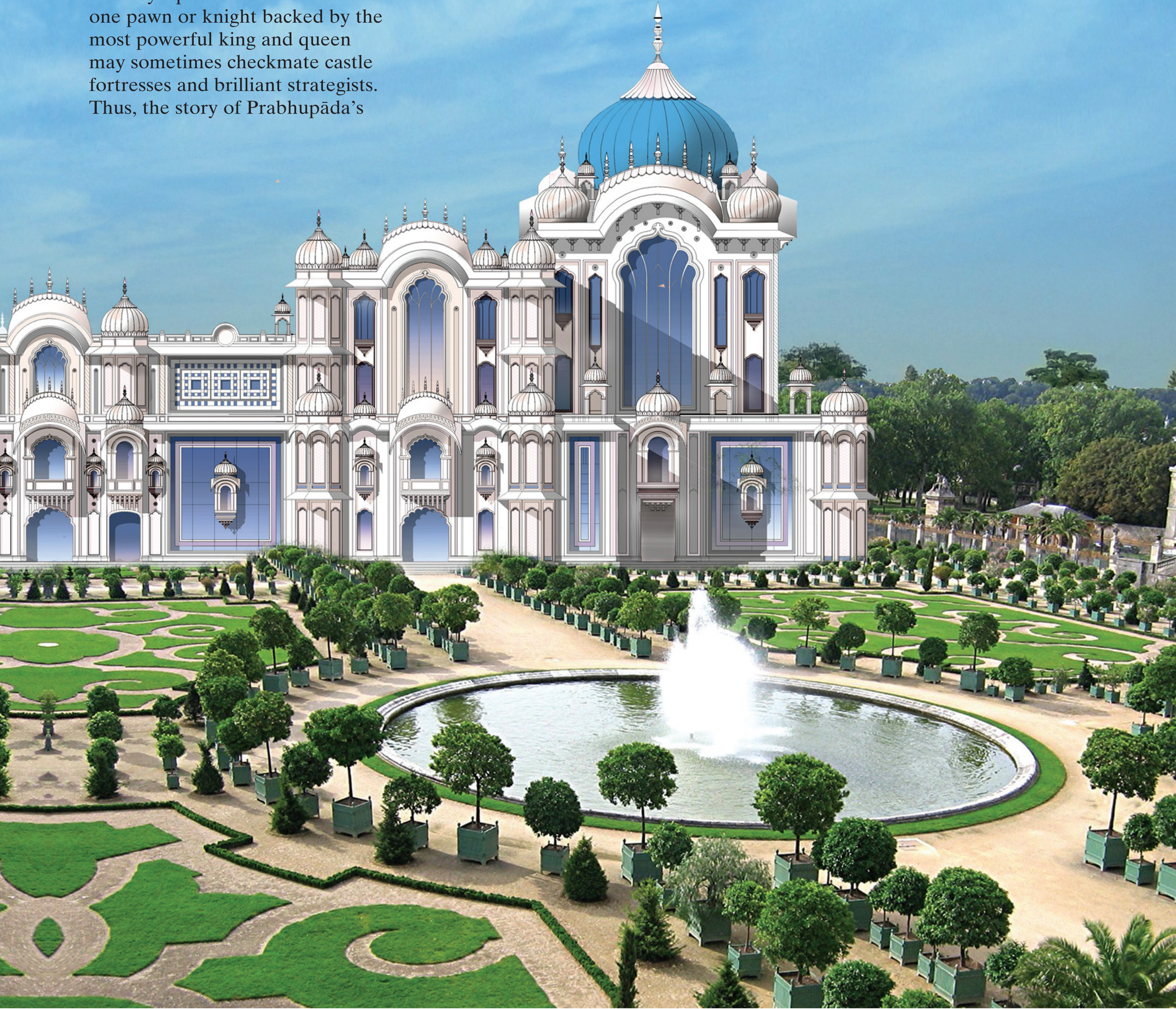
Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees in Moscow are working
to build a stunning Vedic temple and cultural center.
A look back at how they got to this point.

by Satyarāja Dāsa

IT WAS EARLY evening on July 11, 1972. Chess enthusiasts filled a sports arena in Reykjavik, Iceland, while millions watched on TV and listened on the radio. In what was dubbed "the match of the century," Bobby Fischer challenged Boris Spassky, the Russian world chess champion, for the title, knowing full well that emerging victorious would have implications in the Cold War world.

Just one year earlier, Śrīla Prabhupāda had been strategizing to bring God into a godless Soviet Russia. If we think of Prabhupāda's quest as a sort of chess match, it would have seemed that he had few pieces on the board, while the Soviets had the most powerful pieces and key squares blocked. But even one pawn or knight backed by the most powerful king and queen may sometimes checkmate castle fortresses and brilliant strategists. Thus, the story of Prabhupāda's

Russian President Vladimir Putin meets with Sādhupriya Dāsa (Sanjit Kumar Jha), president of the Association of Indians in Russia and one of the organizers of ISKCON's proposed new temple and cultural center in Moscow (below).



Śrīla Prabhupāda walks the streets of Soviet Moscow in 1971 (below), accompanied only by his secretary (taking the photo). While there, Prabhupāda meets Anatoly Pinyayev (left), whom he initiates as his disciple, giving him the name Anantaśānti Dāsa. At right, Moscovites get introduced to Śrīla Prabhupāda's books at the Moscow International Book Fair in 1977 and 1979.

victory trumps that of the World Chess Championship of 1972.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had initially tried to come to the USSR as an official representative of India, writing a letter proclaiming his intent to the Ministry of Culture. But he was denied entrance without explanation. Finally, after several attempts, he was given a tourist visa that granted him a short stay, even if he was not allowed to lecture at Moscow University. The lecture had been one of his reasons for wanting to visit.

Still, Prabhupāda's five days on Russian soil provided him ample opportunity to position himself well for the eventual checkmate his movement would play in Soviet Russia. His initial strategy emerged when, through his disciple and secretary Śyāmasundara Dāsa, he met a young Russian seeker—Anatoly Pinyayev—who would soon become Ananta-śānti Dāsa, his courageous, lone student in the Soviet Union. Another forward move was Prabhupāda's talk with Professor G. G. Kotovsky, then head of the Indian and South Asian Studies Department of the USSR Academy of Sciences. Prabhupāda left a distinct impression on Professor Kotovsky, who got their conversation published in an important Russian periodical ("Vaishnavism" in *Otkrytyi Forum* 1, 1997, pp. 109–114). But it was Ananta-śānti who took Prabhupāda's message to heart, single-handedly, vigorously, sharing what he had learned with hundreds of Soviet people, many who became devotees. After meeting the enthusiastic Russian, Prabhupāda had remarked, "Just as you can judge whether rice is properly cooked by picking out one small grain, so you can know an entire nation by observing one of its handpicked youths."

Next, in 1977 and 1979, the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust received an invitation to the prestigious Moscow International Book Fair, acquainting Moscovites with Prabhupāda's books for the first time. *The New York Times* (July 31, 1983) noted the significance: "[The exhibit] drew curious Russians, the books spread, and Hare Kṛṣṇa was on its way in Russia."

But by 1980, under Brezhnev's rule, several devotees were thrown into prison, initiating a tense and often traumatic relationship between ISKCON and the Soviet Union.

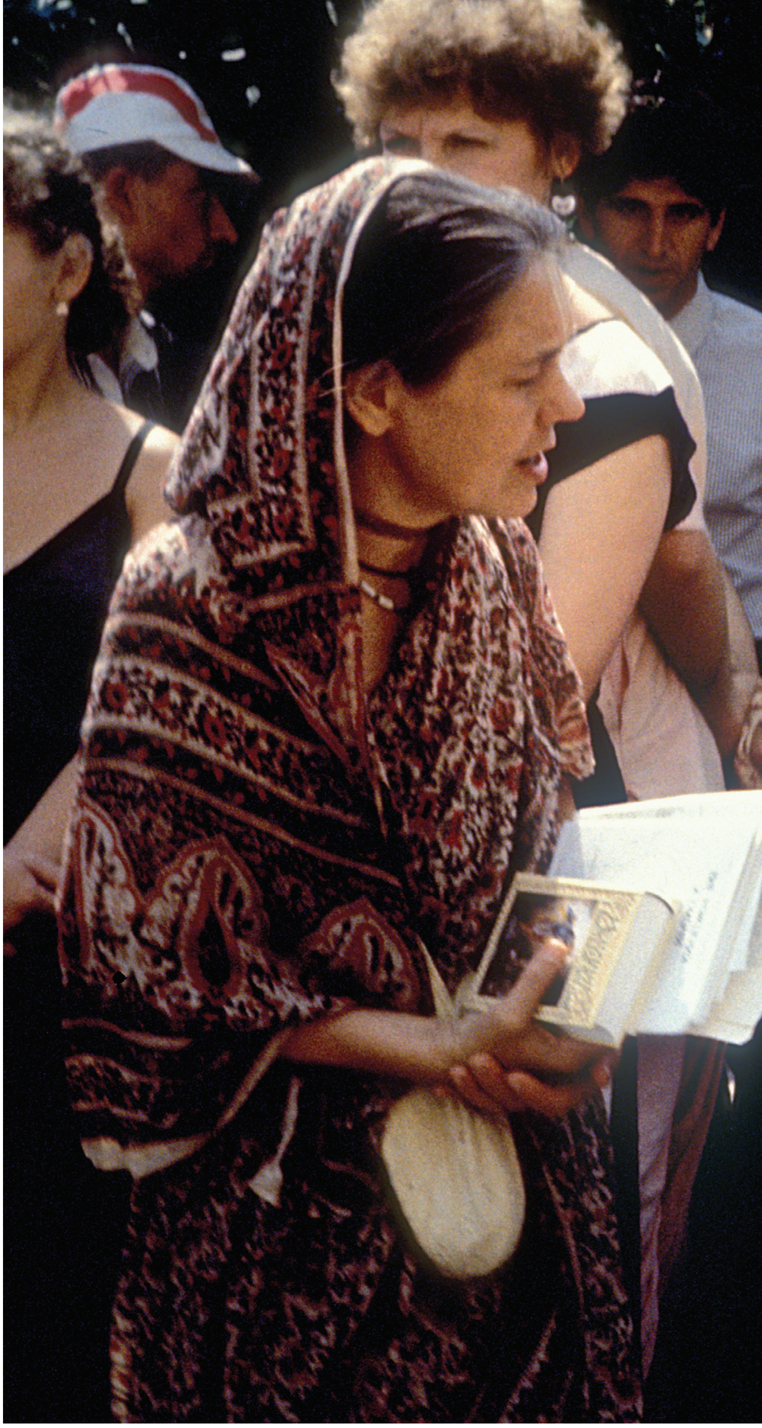
By the mid-1980s Yuri Andropov was in power, and he intensified the campaign already underway against the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. He saw devotees as representing all things religious and was determined to wipe them out. Because of Ananta-śānti's contagious enthusiasm and the staggering results of the book fairs, Semyon Tsvigun, the deputy chief of the KGB under Andropov, said that the three main threats to the Soviet Union were "pop music, Western culture, and Hare Kṛṣṇa."

Such pronouncements, and the sentiments that fueled them, led to intense persecution of Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees.

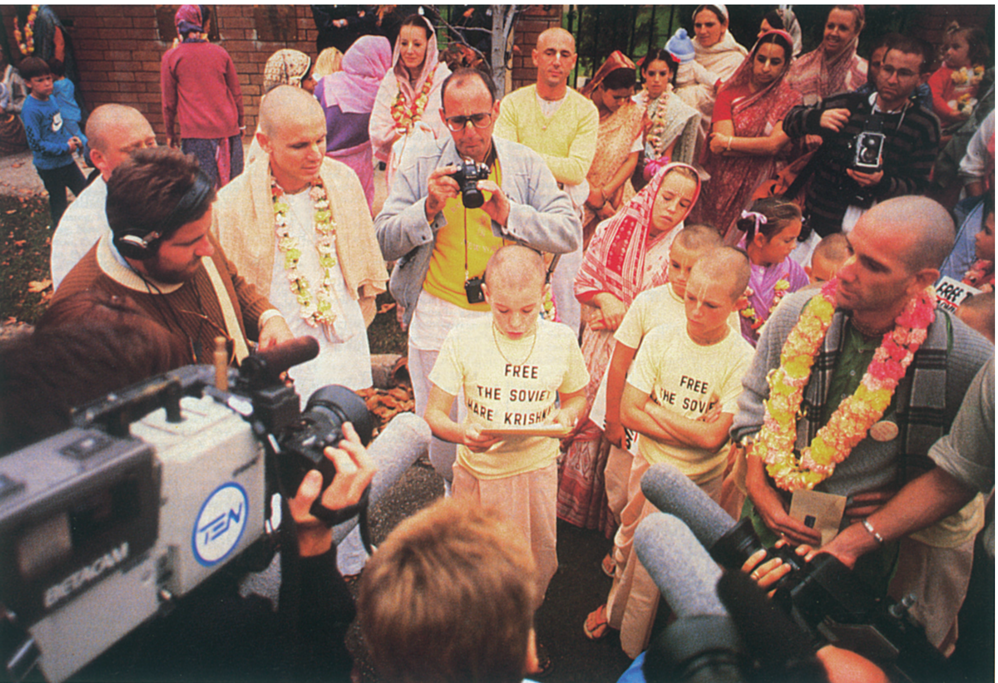
ISKCON Knights in Russia

And so, with ISKCON declared one of the great threats to the Soviet nation, an ongoing battle ensued. But this was no Fischer versus Spassky—two equal adversaries pitted against each other. This was a war conducted by a totalitarian state against a relatively small number of Kṛṣṇa devotees. Consequently, dozens of ISKCON's new Soviet faithful were thrown into prisons, labor camps, and psychiatric hospitals, suffering vicious mistreatment at the hands of police and political yes-men. Several devotees died in prison, clinging tightly to their faith while being tortured in various ways.

Harikeśa Swami, then ISKCON's governing body commissioner for the Soviet Union, would not stand for such horrors. A driving force for reform, he made the Russian tragedy a worldwide concern. Kīrtirāja Dāsa had been ISKCONs regional secretary for the Soviet Union since 1979. He began an international campaign of news releases and demonstrations to pressure Soviet authorities to release the imprisoned devotees and stop the persecution of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. To carry out this work, he founded the Committee to Free Soviet Hare Krishnas. Supportive voices were heard at the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Reykjavik, at the United Nations, and in international newspapers. At the November 1986 meeting in Vienna of the Commission of Security and Cooperation in Europe, the international organization that monitors compliance with the human rights provisions of the Helsinki accords, Hare Kṛṣṇa members again called attention to the plight of imprisoned Soviet devotees.



No longer forced underground by Soviet oppression, Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees can now freely distribute Prabhupāda's books, as this devotee (right) is doing in Leningrad. Below, in 1986 Śrī Prahlāda Dāsa, from an ISKCON school in Australia, reads a statement during the Campaign to Free the Soviet Hare Krishnas.



FREE THE SOVIET HARE KRISHNAS
FREE THE SOVIET
TEN
BETACAM

The situation culminated later that year when Śrī Prahlāda Dāsa, then a pre-teen devotee from an ISKCON school in Australia, joined in Kīrtirāja's efforts. He and "The Krishna Kids" recorded an album on the international EMI label, one of the world's largest record companies. The album included the song "Free the Soviet Krishnas," a plea to Gorbachev that was also released as a single. Prahlāda appeared frequently on television and radio to promote the album and share his concern for the devotees in Russia. Eventually the devotees were freed, marking a new beginning for religion in the former Soviet Union.

Pawns, Fake-Outs, And Half Victories

On a beautiful spring day in 1988, the Council for Religious Affairs officially registered the Moscow Society for Krishna Consciousness, concluding, or so it seemed, a longstanding feud between the devotees and the State. (It was the first religious society registered in the Soviet Union since World War II.) Now devotees could chant in public and practice their religion freely. That same year, over 1,600 new religious communities, most of them Russian Orthodox, were registered.

Something was clearly brewing, and many experts attributed the change, in large measure, to the devotees. Only two years later, responding to ISKCON requests, Moscow authorities allotted a dilapidated two-story building to be used as a temple. After the devotees renovated the property, they opened the first ISKCON

After Glasnost, devotees in Leningrad (left) can distribute Prabhupāda's books even to military officers, who would likely have arrested them during the Soviet era. Below, in present-day Russia, Subala Sakha Dāsa shows books to an inquisitive Moscovite.

temple in the history of Russia and the USSR, a temple frequented by large numbers of Hindus as well.

Moreover, in 1991, ISKCON applied for a plot of land to build an authentic Vedic temple and cultural center in Moscow, a huge project. Surprisingly, the application was approved, and devotees began looking for a suitable location. It seemed the government was willing to give the Russian devotees whatever they wanted.

But it didn't last. Water seeks its own level, and Russian authorities soon succumbed to the same religious prejudices they had known in the past. The Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church made an official statement calling the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā* the product of a "false religion." And they called all other religions a threat to the unity of national consciousness and cultural identity.

In 1997 a bill passed by the Russian parliament (Duma) recognized the Russian Orthodox Church as the sole, preeminent religion of the Russian Federation, with an addendum acknowledging only three other "traditional" Russian faiths: Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism. Other religions would

Prabhupāda on The Moscow Temple

Vrindavana, July 7, 1977

My dear Harikesa Maharaja,
Please accept my humble obeisances at your feet. His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada has received your letter dated the 28th June, 1977, and instructed me to answer it.

Your letter was super encouraging to His Divine Grace. Prabhupada has been receiving directly reports from Ghanasyama Prabhu [Bhakti Tirtha Swami] about his preaching in Yugoslavia, and these have given him full ecstasy. He has had me read each of them to him no less than ten or eleven times to the biggest men who came to visit him. Prabhupada relishes the reports each and every time.

Prabhupada was especially pleased to learn of the possibility of a temple in Russia. He said, "Take this opportunity immediately. It will be a great triumph if we open a temple there. If you work sincerely, it will come, definitely. The Russian people are not all atheists. They are very good people. I have studied them. Simply the government . . ."

Your servant,
Tamal Krishna Gosvami
Secretary to Srila
Prabhupada

not have the same legal status or any support for their missionary work.

But the devotees, again, would not be intimidated. The ISKCON temple had become the only place of worship for over ten thousand Indians. Throughout the '90s, Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Russia began to flourish, resulting in 97 registered communities, 22 monasteries, and 250 home groups.

As the new millennium dawned, the prime minister of India, A. B. Vajpayee, learned about ISKCON's work from Russian administrators. Despite the gracious approval of Vajpayee, the government of Moscow decided to renovate the area surrounding ISKCON's long-standing temple, threatening the devotees' practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness once again.

And so it was that, in 2004, the Moscow government took back the building and destroyed it according to city renovation plans, depriving thousands of devotees of their place of worship.

Seeking support, ISKCON asked prominent Indian politicians to help. By this time, Vajpayee, the former prime minister, had been following the events in Russia for several years. He met with devotees on numerous occasions, both in India and in Moscow, to map out the best way to resolve their dilemma.

In January 2004, after many years of struggle, the mayor of Moscow finally signed an order proclaiming that land would be given for a new ISKCON temple—in a prominent Moscow location and free of charge, no doubt at the behest of important Indian politicians. The land was on the main road from the Kremlin to the international airport, about a ten-minute drive from the heart of Moscow. The devotees happily relocated to a temporary building on their newly acquired land and were prepared to develop their new temple complex.

It didn't take long, however, for the Russian Orthodox Church, along with Muslim and Jewish authorities, to speak out against the construction, opining that the entire Kṛṣṇa religion was against Russian tradition. Protestors rallied in Pushkin Square, in the center of the capital, brandishing icons, flags, and banners with warnings like "Krishna Followers Are Brainwashed" and "Friends, Defend Your Faith. We Oppose the Expansion of Sects. Beware!"

The protests offended the nearly 100,000 followers of Lord Kṛṣṇa spread across the country. In response, Russia's Indian community, led by Sanjit Kumar Jha, president of the Association of Indians in Russia, retaliated, and a vehement back-and-forth surfaced yet again. Though the devotees knew that Kṛṣṇa would ultimately emerge victorious, it now looked like the odds were against them. As sure as Spassky landed some strategic moves in the early rounds of the Fischer-Spassky match, the Kremlin now seemed to be getting the upper hand. In October 2005, the

কৃষ্ণভক্তদের স্বাগতম
DEVOTEES

In 1989, Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees are allowed to leave Russia for the first time to visit India, where they meet Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in New Delhi (left) and receive a joyful welcome at the Kolkata airport (below).

THE SOVIET HARE KRISHNA DEVOTEES
Thank You Gorbachev! Thank You Glasnost!

mayor of Moscow, Yury Luzhkov, suddenly reversed the order for ISKCON's land, and the temple was demolished.

Conveniently, the office of the city executive attorney found legal discrepancies in the wording of the Moscow government's original order and decided to revise it. The revision was merely a form of subterfuge so that they could gradually cancel it altogether. In short, the devotees now had no home and no outlet for their practice or their preaching.

That being the case, they were inundated with journalists and reporters from major newspapers, radio shows, and TV networks, including the main Russian TV-news program, "Vremyachko." His Holiness Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami, president of ISKCON Russia, was interviewed, as were prominent members of the Indian community, who made their outrage clear. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad stepped in, agreeing to mount a "Defend Russian Hindus" campaign. Dignitaries from India and Russia came forward, until their voices were heard loud and clear.

Food for Life

WHILE ISKCON has been struggling for justice in Russia, its Food for Life volunteers have given out over one million bowls of hot porridge, freshly baked bread, and tea. Risking their lives, devotees in Russia went on humanitarian missions to war zones like Chechnya and Abkhazia to feed people. Again and again they showed that faith in God and divine service is more important than bodily comforts and selfish pursuits. Devotees helped hundreds of thousands of Russians, Chechens, Georgians, and Armenians—children and adults, victims of war. Hare Krishna Food for Life was the only Russia-based non-governmental charity organization, working in Russia's war zone.

Devotees gave deprived people hope for a better future, spiritual solace, and moral support. Often arrested for their service, they continued to distribute sacred food to needy people. Some were even killed while trying to help others.

One example of the devotees' efforts: An earthquake measuring 7.2 flattened a small city in the far eastern peninsula of Russia. The next day, Food for Life volunteers were flown in by helicopter by the Russian emergency ministry. Once they arrived, they provided hot food to survivors and rescue teams who worked around the clock to find bodies and tend to survivors.

Serving prasādam *in Chechnya, 1994.*

Endgame

The Moscow mayor finally allocated land to ISKCON, despite objections by the Orthodox Church,

Since the demise of Soviet rule, devotees have taken advantage of their freedom to spread the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's holy names (above and left, in Leningrad).

which threatened to renew its protests against the construction. But the die was cast, and overturning the mayor's decisions seems highly unlikely. Devotees played a winning move.

The significance of a final and abiding land allocation should be clearly understood. Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism, along with the Russian Orthodox Church, are Russia's traditional religions, deemed part of Russia's heritage. But the Hare Kṛṣṇa religion—Vaiṣṇavism, and even its Hindu relatives—is not part of that exclusive group, which makes the land grant a coup of historic proportions. Land was not awarded to Catholic and Protestant sects; the only Christian sect to get land was the Russian Orthodox Church. Only ISKCON and the other three accepted religions received land.

An important voice influencing the mayor's decision was that of Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, who had come to Russia for the Delhi Culture Fest and to

Throughout Russia and other countries of the former USSR (above, right, and far right), devotees spread the message of Lord Kṛṣṇa with great enthusiasm.

ISKCON holds its Moscow Rathayātrā (chariot festival, left) in the city's famous Arbat district. The festival takes place in other former Soviet republics as well.

renew diplomatic relations. She was incensed by the entire temple debacle and insisted that the situation be corrected at once.

Earlier, the issue had been raised at various diplomatic meetings, with Russian President Vladimir Putin assuring Indian Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh that he would look into the matter. Apparently, he did.

K. Raghunath, India's ambassador to Russia, made the following comment in a speech aired nationwide:

> I would also like to speak a few words in address to the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). We are close to this organization. ISKCON attained a wonderful success in spreading the philosophy of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and implementing it in everyday life. Besides this, ISKCON works hard to preserve and protect the unparalleled culture of India. ISKCON also deserves glorification for strengthening the friendly bond between Russia and India.

The campaign to build the new temple, known as "Temple of the Heart," is receiving support from patrons around the world.

Fall 2006 witnessed a new dawn for ISKCON Russia: More than six thousand people, mostly Indians, came to the still unfinished but beautiful temple to celebrate Janmāṣṭamī, the anniversary of Lord Kṛṣṇa's advent in this world. In attendance were the ambassadors of Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Mauritius and the Director of the J. Nehru Cultural Center. One year later, also on Janmāṣṭamī, ISKCON signed a contract to proceed with architectural plans for the new temple. That day they also secured the governmental approvals and permits needed to start building.

Though some intrigue lingered, with special interest groups trying to thwart the work, nothing could stop the devotees now. They had important political leaders on their side, and the public had become fully aware of the situation. Any attempt to stop the project would become prominent in the

Letter from an Observer

by Devī Deva Dāsa

AFTER BEING ASKED to help with the Moscow temple project in 2000, I began to pay more attention to the Russian news. Two things became clear: Moscow's newfound wealth, and the power Russia has come to possess within the international community. It is extremely important for the roots of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to take hold in Russia now.

As I traveled over the next few years for organizational meetings with various departments and dedicated souls, I gained an overwhelming respect for the creative, cultural, and spiritual nature of Russians and have come to see that they are seekers of truth. They have suffered greatly. Kṛṣṇa consciousness and answers that come from the Vedic literature are a welcome respite for their broken hearts.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in Russia has been on a long journey. But ultimately the ordeal has been for the better, since the journey has afforded Kṛṣṇa's devotees many opportunities to transmit Vedic culture, build relationships, and enlist prominent supporters. Devotees in Russia have received support from the British parliament and the mayor of Delhi, as well as many high-ranking officials in the federal governments of India and Russia. All have used robust diplomatic pressure to help the devotees build the first major ISKCON temple in Russia.

The quest to build that first temple has been a long uphill battle. Through this prolonged struggle, the devotees have been forced to hold services in an abandoned parking lot, with no water or sewage system to speak of. Despite these trials and previous one, many have dedicated themselves to Kṛṣṇa consciousness for over twenty years now. They have visited India, gone on devotional pilgrimages, and continued to increase their faith in many ways. They have developed over sixty communities in the former USSR, all created in a mood of self-sacrifice. The Kṛṣṇa devotees in Russia possess a strong work ethic and are always eager to do whatever is needed to get the job done. I'm inspired to bear witness to this, and hundreds of my colleagues have expressed similar sentiments.

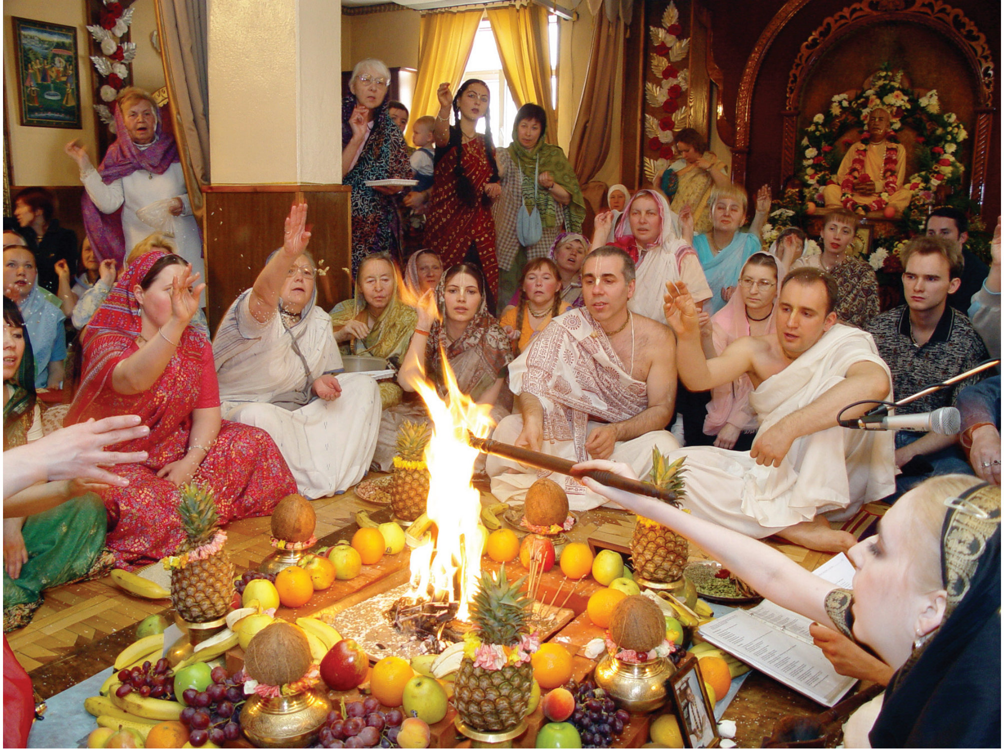
I have attended three gatherings/festivals on the Black Sea resort area of Russia. What an experience! The huge assortment of Russian devotees spanned all ages and backgrounds. From the very young to the very old, entire families and many well-educated youths were in attendance.

Devotees have friends among sophisticated leaders in Russian society and the arts. Russian devotees are populating temples all over the world. Devotees have met with Vladimir Putin and former Indian Prime Minister A. B. Vajpayee.

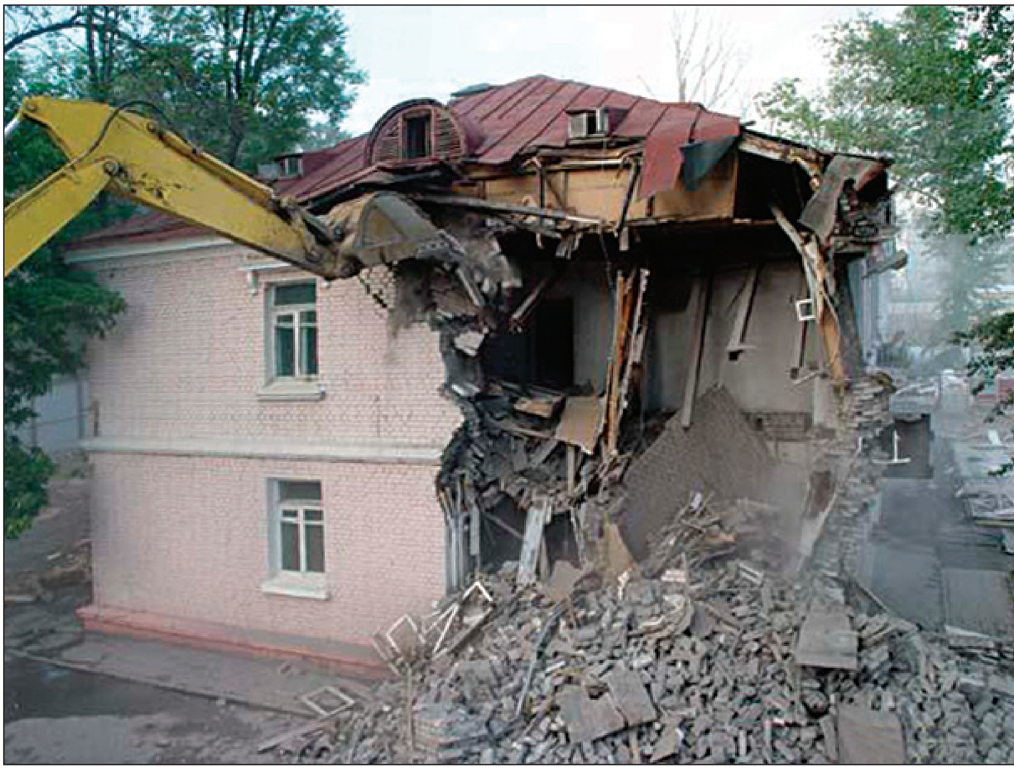
What a ride it has been thus far, with so many twists and turns in our history in Russia! Now we have entered a new phase, and the most exciting times are in front of us.

On September 4, 2007, after the Moscow city government allotted the land, the devotees finalized the temple designs and signed a contract with an architectural firm to build the temple. The temple and cultural center will be world class, located on high ground overlooking a beautiful river and protected forests. The upscale area is known as "the Switzerland of Moscow."

We launched a fundraising campaign last November to raise the $15 million dollars it will take to



Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees take part in a traditional Vedic fire sacrifice (left) in the temple that was later (2004) destroyed by Moscow city authorities (below).



build the exquisite temple, where Russians of all ages and backgrounds can be educated formally in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The center will provide a fertile environment for the further cultural exchange of Russian and Vedic cultures, which already contributes to the Russian devotees' dynamic theater and arts program. Devotees have had an ongoing food relief program and are well respected for their public services. Endowed with the beautiful space a temple can provide, devotees will be able to branch out and expand these services.

As a growing spiritual community, the devotees face the challenge of maintaining strong community involvement from its members. It is a difficult time for families, who have to deal with harsh economic realities. Corruption is still rampant in Russia, and particularly so in Moscow. This, coupled with an atmosphere of distrust spawned from memories of the past, weighs heavily on the aspiring students of spiritual life. They are in need of our help.

Please join us in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to give something of permanent value to the souls of Russia.

Visit www.moscowtemple.org.

news. Because of the determined efforts of the devotees, the Indian government, and other international entities, ISKCON Russia is now on solid ground.

"It was all Krishna's arrangement," says Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami, one of ISKCON's governing body commissioners in Moscow (with Nirañjana Swami and Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami). "Through all the political machinations and the difficult times, we ended up with the best possible temple grounds. It's much better land than we had before, and quite reminiscent of Vṛndāvana, where Kṛṣṇa came to earth five thousand years ago. It's a bit away from the center of the city, and it's in the midst of beautiful rivers, rolling mountains, and a gorgeous forest area. Kṛṣṇa knew what He was doing. Hundreds of thousands of people will come here to learn mantra meditation and the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Even in 2003, while going through more trying times, the devotees knew considerable success: Almost 6,000 people visited the temple that year, and an additional 14,500 schoolchildren observed temple services as part of mandatory classroom experience. Devotees chanted regularly on Moscow streets, distributed *prasādam* widely, and put over 160,000 books into Russian hands.

Naturally, with the new temple things have only increased. The Indian congregation numbers around 15,000 people, many of them students at colleges and other institutions of higher learning.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee (above), India's Prime Minister from 1998 to 2004, hears about ISKCON's Moscow project from Sādhu-priya Dāsa (center in photo) and Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami. At right: a recent class on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* at ISKCON's temporary temple in Moscow.

Many native Moscovites have become full-time devotees or attend ISKCON's temple services and festivals throughout the year. Prabhupāda's books now appear in ten of Russia's offical languages, and more than eleven million copies of his *Bhagavad-gita As It Is,* in Russian translation, have been distributed.

The Vedic Cultural Center

All that being said, the new temple is clearly the most significant trophy in ISKCON Russia's battle for religious freedom. As currently planned, it will be a Vedic Cultural Center with the following features:

1. Vedic temple
2. Veda-expo multimedia hall
3. Educational and cultural center
4. Library of Vedic classics
5. Social services center
6. Healthcare center
7. Conference hall
8. Restaurant of Vedic cuisine
9. Winter garden

Prominent ISKCON devotees from around the world have visited the fledgling Moscow temple, considered its leaders' vision for the future, and come away deeply impressed. They could not help but acknowledge its potential and its worldwide ramifications.

Said Bhakti Tīrtha Swami (1950–2005) soon before he left this world: "We are noticing that the Russian devotees are some of the most enthusiastic devotees in the world. So many devotees are being made, so much preaching opportunity, so many people are coming forth. Therefore, we need something very grand, very wonderful, to accommodate all of these people. . . . History will show how the devotees in CIS, and Russia in particular, were empowered to estab-

lish this most grand and glorious, famous and fabulous temple."

"We are excited," he continued. "We want to encourage as many people as possible to support this effort—because it is an effort not just for CIS, or for Russia, but . . . it is something for the whole world, something Śrīla Prabhupāda himself very much wanted. He was so concerned about preaching throughout the world, and in his last days he expressed a special concern about the preaching in the communist countries."

Radhānātha Swami, too, was recently outspoken about the far-reaching potential of the project in Russia: "I sincerely believe that building this temple in Moscow is one of the most important projects in the history of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement."

"Śrīla Prabhupāda personally

went to Moscow in the early 1970s," says Rādhānātha Swami, "and although it was behind the Iron Curtain, where atheism and communism were prominent, Śrīla Prabhupāda saw immense potential in the people of Russia to accept the doctrine of pure, unalloyed love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. And so he wrote that if the devotees sincerely worked together . . . this temple would be built. And he stated emphatically that it would be a great triumph."

Bhakti Cāru Swami also spoke eloquently about the significance of the devotees' work in the former Soviet Union: "Who could have imagined that Kṛṣṇa consciousness would spread in Russia? But Caitanya Mahāprabhu predicted that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement would spread to every town and village of the world, and He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead—so His prediction will never go in vain."

Concludes Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami: "The establishment of this temple in Russia is huge—historically, symbolically, emotionally, and spiritually. The temple will also be huge in size, accommodating thousands of devotees, visitors, and seekers. We are already seeing this on a practical level, and its impact is second only to temples in India. In the long run, its influence will be felt all over the world, not only in Eastern Europe, Russia, and the former Soviet Union. It will have huge meaning for ISKCON and beyond ISKCON, all over the world."

Boris Spassky lost his world championship chess match with Bobby Fischer. Though Russian chess pros had held the title for more than forty years, this was the first time a Soviet player would enter the match as an underdog. In chess, superior strategy always wins in the end, but in life, it's always best to be on the side of the righteous. As the *Bhagavad-gītā* tells us in its concluding verse, "Wherever there is Kṛṣṇa, the master of all mystics, and wherever there is Arjuna, the supreme archer, there will also certainly be opulence, victory, extraordinary power, and morality." Nearly every Moscovite now benefits from Prabhupāda's books and the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, which is a winning move. And though Red Square is still the most famous city square in Moscow, the Temple of the Heart will soon have everyone in check.

Satyarāja Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, is a BTG associate editor. He has written over twenty books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness and lives near New York City.

STAGES OF PURIFICATION

(*continued from page 15*)

desires cease to exist as we drown in the ocean of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* and *kṛṣṇa-prema.*

Victory Over Illusion

The next stage Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu explains is *param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam.* Lord Caitanya says, "Go on with this *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana.* Let it be victorious in all directions." This is Lord Caitanya's benediction: The holy name of the Lord, when chanted by sincere devotees, not only delivers the six previous wonderful blessings, but it spreads out and expands to create victory over illusion and throughout the world. Wherever the Lord's sincere devotees chant the holy name, these seven effects will take place. The supreme ultimate victory is accomplished through the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Rādhānātha Swami, an ISKCON guru, is an ISKCON governing body commissioner with responsibilities in parts of India and the United States. He is based at ISKCON Chowpatty (Mumbai).

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BOOK SECTION: ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Referred to as "the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature," *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa,* or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

QUEEN SURUCI INSULTS DHRUVA

Maitreya Ṛṣi begins the story of young Dhruva Mahārāja, who because of his stepmother's insults went to the forest alone to search for the Supreme Lord.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 8

8 जाये उत्तानपादस्य सुनीतिः सुरुचिस्तयोः
सुरुचिः प्रेयसी पत्युर्नेतरा यत्सुतो ध्रुवः

jāye uttānapādasya
sunītiḥ surucis tayoḥ
suruciḥ preyasī patyur
netarā yat-suto dhruvaḥ

jāye—of the two wives; *uttānapādasya*—of King Uttānapāda; *sunītiḥ*—Sunīti; *suruciḥ*—Suruci; *tayoḥ*—of both of them; *suruciḥ*—Suruci; *preyasī*—very dear; *patyuḥ*—of the husband; *na itarā*—not the other; *yat*—whose; *sutaḥ*—son; *dhruvaḥ*—Dhruva.

King Uttānapāda had two queens, named Sunīti and Suruci. Suruci was much more dear to the King; Sunīti, who had a son named Dhruva, was not his favorite.

PURPORT: The great sage Maitreya wanted to describe the pious activities of the kings. ① Priyavrata was the first son of Svāyambhuva Manu, and Uttānapāda was the second, but the great sage Maitreya immediately began to speak of Dhruva Mahārāja, the son of Uttānapāda, because Maitreya was very eager to describe pious activities. The incidents in the life of Dhruva Mahārāja are very attractive for devotees. ② From his pious actions, one can learn how one can detach himself from material possessions and how one can enhance one's devotional service by severe austerities and penances. By hearing the activities of pious Dhruva, one can enhance one's faith in God and can directly connect with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and thus one can very soon be elevated to the transcendental platform of devotional service. The example of Dhruva Mahārāja's austerities can immediately generate a feeling of devotional service in the hearts of the hearers.

9 एकदा सुरुचेः पुत्रमङ्कमारोप्य लालयन्
उत्तमं नारुरुक्षन्तं ध्रुवं राजाभ्यनन्दत

ekadā suruceḥ putram
aṅkam āropya lālayan
uttamaṁ nārurukṣantaṁ
dhruvaṁ rājābhyanandata

ekadā—once upon a time; *suruceḥ*—of Queen Suruci; *putram*—the son; *aṅkam*—on the lap; *āropya*—placing;

(1) Why did Maitreya begin by describing Dhruva Mahārāja, even though his father was not the eldest son of Svāyambhuva Manu?
(2) What are some of the things one can learn by hearing of the life of Dhruva Mahārāja?

lālayan—while patting; *uttamam*—Uttama; *na*—did not; *ārurukṣantam*—trying to get on; *dhruvam*—Dhruva; *rājā*—the King; *abhyanandata*—welcome.

Once upon a time, King Uttānapāda was patting the son of Suruci, Uttama, placing him on his lap. Dhruva Mahārāja was also trying to get on the King's lap, but the King did not very much welcome him.

10 तथा चिकीर्षमाणं तं सपत्न्यास्तनयं ध्रुवम्
सुरुचिः शृण्वतो राज्ञः सेर्ष्यमाहातिगर्विता

tathā cikīrṣamāṇaṁ taṁ
sapatnyās tanayaṁ dhruvam
suruciḥ śṛṇvato rājñaḥ
serṣyam āhātigarvitā

tathā—thus; *cikīrṣamāṇam*—the child Dhruva, who was trying to get up; *tam*—unto him; *sa-patnyāḥ*—of her co-wife (Sunīti); *tanayam*—son; *dhruvam*—Dhruva; *suruciḥ*—Queen Suruci; *śṛṇvataḥ*—while hearing; *rājñaḥ*—of the King; *sa-īrṣyam*—with envy; *āha*—said; *atigarvitā*—being too proud.

While the child, Dhruva Mahārāja, was trying to get on the lap of his father, Suruci, his stepmother, became very envious of the child, and with great pride she began to speak so as to be heard by the King himself.

PURPORT: The King, of course, was equally affectionate toward both his sons, Uttama and Dhruva, so he had a natural inclination to take Dhruva, as well as Uttama, on his lap. ③ But because of his favoritism towards his queen Suruci, he could not welcome Dhruva Mahārāja, despite his feelings. King Uttānapāda's feeling was understood by Suruci, and therefore with great pride she began to speak about the King's affection for her. This is the nature of woman. If a woman understands that her husband regards her as a favorite and is especially affectionate to her, she takes undue advantage. These symptoms are visible even in such an elevated society as the family of Svāyambhuva Manu. Therefore it is concluded that the feminine nature of woman is present everywhere.

11 न वत्स नृपतेर्धिष्ण्यं भवानारोढुमर्हति
न गृहीतो मया यत्त्वं कुक्षावपि नृपात्मजः

na vatsa nṛpater dhiṣṇyaṁ
bhavān āroḍhum arhati
na gṛhīto mayā yat tvaṁ
kukṣāv api nṛpātmajaḥ

(3) Why couldn't the King welcome his son Dhruva onto his lap?
(4) Why did Queen Suruci consider Dhruva Mahārāja an illegitimate son?

na—not; *vatsa*—my dear child; *nṛpateḥ*—of the King; *dhiṣṇyam*—seat; *bhavān*—yourself; *āroḍhum*—to get on; *arhati*—deserve; *na*—not; *gṛhītaḥ*—taken; *mayā*—by me; *yat*—because; *tvam*—you; *kukṣau*—in the womb; *api*—although; *nṛpa-ātmajaḥ*—son of the King.

Queen Suruci told Dhruva Mahārāja: My dear child, you do not deserve to sit on the throne or on the lap of the King. Surely you are also the son of the King, but because you did not take your birth from my womb, you are not qualified to sit on your father's lap.

PURPORT: Queen Suruci very proudly informed Dhruva Mahārāja that to be the King's son was not the qualification for sitting on the lap or throne of the King. Rather, this privilege was dependent on one's having taken birth from her womb. ④ In other words, she indirectly informed Dhruva Mahārāja that although he happened to be born of the King, he was considered an illegitimate son because of his birth from the womb of the other queen.

12 बालोऽसि बत नात्मानमन्यस्त्रीगर्भसम्भृतम्
नूनं वेद भवान् यस्य दुर्लभेऽर्थे मनोरथः

bālo 'si bata nātmānam
anya-strī-garbha-sambhṛtam
nūnaṁ veda bhavān yasya
durlabhe 'rthe manorathaḥ

bālaḥ—child; *asi*—you are; *bata*—however; *na*—not; *ātmānam*—my own; *anya*—other; *strī*—woman; *garbha*—womb; *sambhṛtam*—born by; *nūnam*—however; *veda*—just try to know; *bhavān*—yourself; *yasya*—of which; *durlabhe*—unapproachable; *arthe*—matter; *manaḥ-rathaḥ*—desirous.

My dear child, you are unaware that you were born not of my womb but of another woman. Therefore you should know that your attempt is doomed to failure. You are trying to fulfill a desire which is impossible to fulfill.

PURPORT: The small child, Dhruva Mahārāja, was naturally affectionate toward his father, and he did not know that there was a distinction between his two mothers. This distinction was pointed out by Queen Suruci, who informed him that since he was a child he did not understand the distinction between the two queens. This is another statement of Queen Suruci's pride.

13 तपसाराध्य पुरुषं तस्यैवानुग्रहेण मे
गर्भे त्वं साधयात्मानं यदीच्छसि नृपासनम्

tapasārādhya puruṣaṁ
tasyaivānugraheṇa me

garbhe tvaṁ sādhayātmānaṁ
yadīcchasi nṛpāsanam

tapasā—by austerities; *ārādhya*—having satisfied; *puruṣam*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *tasya*—by His; *eva*—only; *anugraheṇa*—by the mercy of; *me*—my; *garbhe*—in the womb; *tvam*—you; *sādhaya*—place; *ātmānam*—yourself; *yadi*—if; *icchasi*—you desire; *nṛpa-āsanam*—on the throne of the King.

If you at all desire to rise to the throne of the King, then you have to undergo severe austerities. First of all you must satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa, and then, when you are favored by Him because of such worship, you shall have to take your next birth from my womb.

PURPORT: ⑤ Suruci was so envious of Dhruva Mahārāja that she indirectly asked him to change his body. According to her, first of all he had to die, then take his next body in her womb, and only then would it be possible for Dhruva Mahārāja to ascend the throne of his father.

मैत्रेय उवाच
14 मातुः सपत्न्याः स दुरुक्तिविद्धः
श्वसन् रुषा दण्डहतो यथाहिः
हित्वा मिषन्तं पितरं सन्नवाचं
जगाम मातुः प्ररुदन् सकाशम्

maitreya uvāca
mātuḥ sapatnyāḥ sa durukti-viddhaḥ
śvasan ruṣā daṇḍa-hato yathāhiḥ
hitvā miṣantaṁ pitaraṁ sanna-vācaṁ
jagāma mātuḥ prarudan sakāśam

maitreyaḥ uvāca—the great sage Maitreya said; *mātuḥ*—of his mother; *sa-patnyāḥ*—of the co-wife; *saḥ*—he; *durukti*—harsh words; *viddhaḥ*—being pierced by; *śvasan*—breathing very heavily; *ruṣā*—out of anger; *daṇḍa-hataḥ*—struck by a stick; *yathā*—as much as; *ahiḥ*—a snake; *hitvā*—giving up; *miṣantam*—simply looking over; *pitaram*—his father; *sanna-vācam*—silently; *jagāma*—went; *mātuḥ*—to his mother; *prarudan*—weeping; *sakāśam*—near.

The sage Maitreya continued: My dear Vidura, as a snake, when struck by a stick, breathes very heavily, Dhruva Mahārāja, having been struck by the strong words of his stepmother, began to breathe very heavily because of great anger. When he saw that his father was silent and did not protest, he immediately left the palace and went to his mother.

15 तं निःश्वसन्तं स्फुरिताधरोष्ठ
सुनीतिरुत्सङ्ग उदूह्य बालम्
निशम्य तत्पौरमुखान्नितान्तं
सा विव्यथे यद्गदितं सपत्न्या

taṁ niḥśvasantaṁ sphuritādharoṣṭhaṁ
sunītir utsaṅga udūhya bālam
niśamya tat-paura-mukhān nitāntaṁ
sā vivyathe yad gaditaṁ sapatnyā

tam—him; *niḥśvasantam*—heavily breathing; *sphurita*—trembling; *adhara-oṣṭham*—upper and lower lips; *sunītiḥ*—Queen Sunīti; *utsaṅge*—on her lap; *udūhya*—lifting; *bālam*—her son; *niśamya*—after hearing; *tat-paura-mukhāt*—from the mouths of other inhabitants; *nitāntam*—all descriptions; *sā*—she; *vivyathe*—became aggrieved; *yat*—that which; *gaditam*—spoken; *sa-patnyā*—by her co-wife.

When Dhruva Mahārāja reached his mother, his lips were trembling in anger, and he was crying very grievously. Queen Sunīti immediately lifted her son onto her lap, while the palace residents who had heard all the harsh words of Suruci related everything in detail. Thus Sunīti also became greatly aggrieved.

16 सोत्सृज्य धैर्यं विललाप शोक-
दावाग्निना दावलतेव बाला
वाक्यं सपत्न्याः स्मरती सरोज-
श्रिया दृशा बाष्पकलामुवाह

sotsṛjya dhairyaṁ vilalāpa śoka-
dāvāgninā dāva-lateva bālā
vākyaṁ sapatnyāḥ smaratī saroja-
śriyā dṛśā bāṣpa-kalām uvāha

sā—she; *utsṛjya*—giving up; *dhairyam*—patience; *vilalāpa*—lamented; *śoka-dāva-agninā*—by the fire of grief; *dāvalatā iva*—like burnt leaves; *bālā*—the woman; *vākyam*—words; *sa-patnyāḥ*—spoken by her co-wife; *smaratī*—remember; *saroja-śriyā*—a face as beautiful as a lotus; *dṛśā*—by looking; *bāṣpa-kalām*—weeping; *uvāha*—said.

This incident was unbearable to Sunīti's patience. She began to burn as if in a forest fire, and in her grief she became just like a burnt leaf and so lamented. As she remembered the words of her co-wife, her bright, lotus-like face filled with tears, and thus she spoke.

PURPORT: When a man is aggrieved, he feels exactly like a burnt leaf in a forest fire. Sunīti's position was like that.

(5) What did Queen Suruci tell Dhruva he must do to rise to the throne of the King?

⑥ Although her face was as beautiful as a lotus flower, it dried up because of the burning fire caused by the harsh words of her co-wife.

17 दीर्घं श्वसन्ती वृजिनस्य पार-
मपश्यती बालकमाह बाला
मामङ्गलं तात परेषु मंस्था
भुङ्क्ते जनो यत्परदुःखदस्तत्

dīrghaṁ śvasantī vṛjinasya pāram
apaśyatī bālakam āha bālā
māmaṅgalaṁ tāta pareṣu maṁsthā
bhuṅkte jano yat para-duḥkhadas tat

dīrgham—heavy; *śvasantī*—breathing; *vṛjinasya*—of the danger; *pāram*—limitation; *apaśyatī*—without finding; *bālakam*—to her son; *āha*—said; *bālā*—the lady; *mā*—let there not be; *amaṅgalam*—ill fortune; *tāta*—my dear son; *pareṣu*—unto others; *maṁsthāḥ*—desire; *bhuṅkte*—suffered; *janaḥ*—person; *yat*—that which; *para-duḥkhadaḥ*—who is apt to inflict pains upon others; *tat*—that.

She also was breathing very heavily, and she did not know the factual remedy for the painful situation. Not finding any remedy, she said to her son: ⑦ My dear son, don't wish for anything inauspicious for others. Anyone who inflicts pains upon others suffers himself from that pain.

18 सत्यं सुरुच्याभिहितं भवान्मे
यद् दुर्भगाया उदरे गृहीतः
स्तन्येन वृद्धश्च विलज्जते यां
भार्येति वा वोढुमिडस्पतिर्माम्

satyaṁ surucyābhihitaṁ bhavān me
yad durbhagāyā udare gṛhītaḥ
stanyena vṛddhaś ca vilajjate yāṁ
bhāryeti vā voḍhum iḍaspatir mām

satyam—truth; *surucyā*—by Queen Suruci; *abhihitam*—narrated; *bhavān*—unto you; *me*—of me; *yat*—because; *durbhagāyāḥ*—of the unfortunate; *udare*—in the womb; *gṛhītaḥ*—taken birth; *stanyena*—fed by the breast milk; *vṛddhaḥ ca*—grown up; *vilajjate*—becomes ashamed; *yām*—unto one; *bhāryā*—wife; *iti*—thus; *vā*—or; *voḍhum*—to accept; *iḍaḥ-patiḥ*—the King; *mām*—me.

(6) What made Queen Sunīti's beautiful face dry up like a burnt leaf?
(7) What was the first instruction Queen Sunīti gave her son?
(8) Why were Suruci's words of insult indirectly a benediction for Dhruva Mahārāja?

Sunīti said: My dear boy, whatever has been spoken by Suruci is so, because the King, your father, does not consider me his wife or even his maidservant. He feels ashamed to accept me. Therefore it is a fact that you have taken birth from the womb of an unfortunate woman, and by being fed from her breast you have grown up.

19 आतिष्ठ तत्तात विमत्सरस्त्व-
मुक्तं समात्रापि यदव्यलीकम्
आराधयाधोक्षजपादपद्मं
यदीच्छसेऽध्यासनमुत्तमो यथा

ātiṣṭha tat tāta vimatsaras tvam
uktaṁ samātrāpi yad avyalīkam
ārādhayādhokṣaja-pāda-padmaṁ
yadīcchase 'dhyāsanam uttamo yathā

ātiṣṭha—just execute; *tat*—that; *tāta*—my dear son; *vimatsaraḥ*—without being envious; *tvam*—unto you; *uktam*—said; *samātrā api*—by your stepmother; *yat*—whatever; *avyalīkam*—they are all factual; *ārādhaya*—just begin worshiping; *adhokṣaja*—the Transcendence; *pāda-padmam*—lotus feet; *yadi*—if; *icchase*—desire; *adhyāsanam*—to be seated along with; *uttamaḥ*—your stepbrother; *yathā*—as much as.

My dear boy, whatever has been spoken by Suruci, your stepmother, although very harsh to hear, is factual. Therefore, if you desire at all to sit on the same throne as your stepbrother, Uttama, then give up your envious attitude and immediately try to execute the instructions of your stepmother. Without further delay, you must engage yourself in worshiping the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

PURPORT: The harsh words used by Suruci to her stepson were true because unless one is favored by the Supreme Personality of Godhead one cannot achieve any success in life. Man proposes, God disposes. Sunīti, the mother of Dhruva Mahārāja, agreed with her co-wife's advice that Dhruva engage himself in the worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. ⑧ Indirectly, the words of Suruci were a benediction for Dhruva Mahārāja, for because of the influence of his stepmother's words, he became a great devotee.

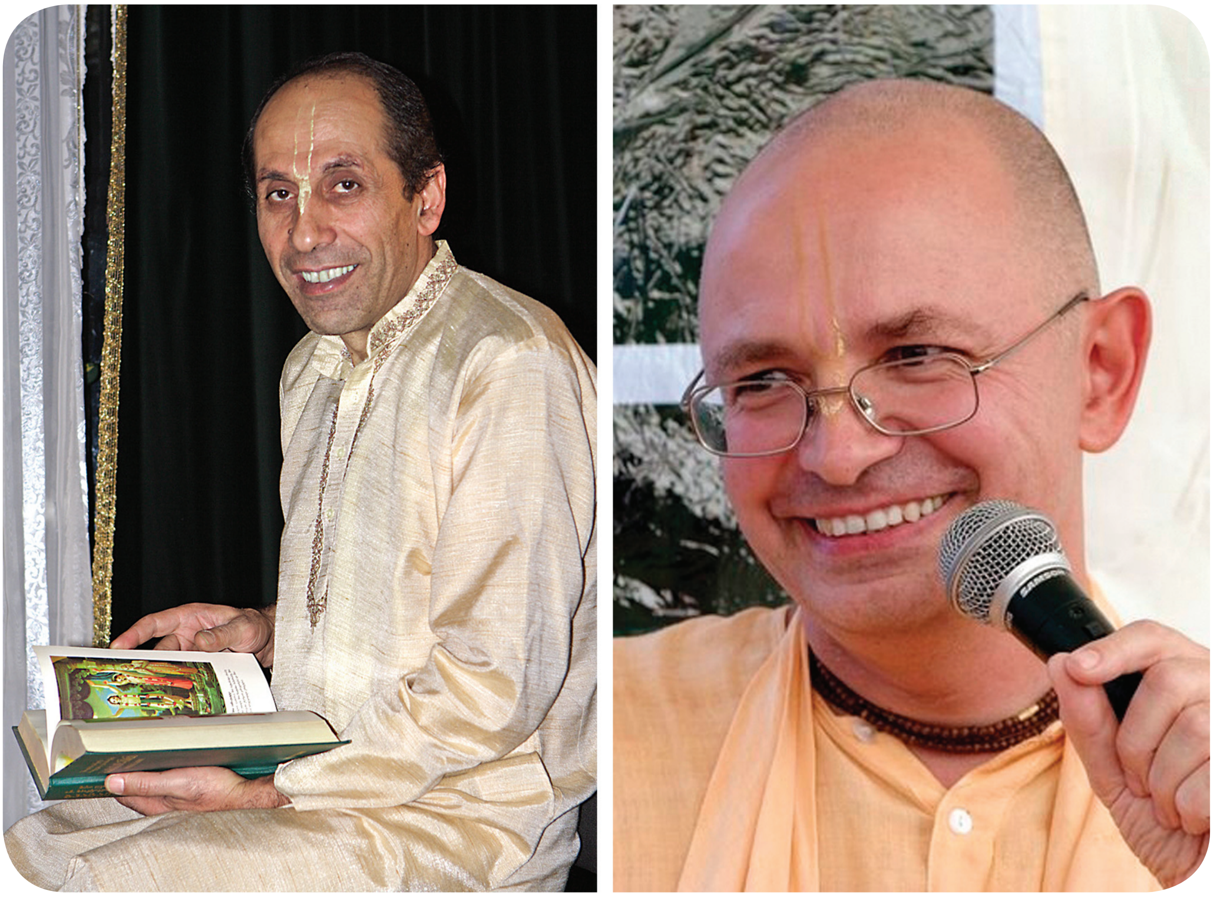
[*Continued in the next issue.*]

TWO SEEDS THAT GREW IN IRON

Two leaders of the Moscow temple project flourished in devotion to Kṛṣṇa behind the Iron Curtain

by Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī

As heard from Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami



Brahmānanda Purī Dāsa (left) and Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami

THE GOAL was a nation of atheists. Over three generations—seventy years—the government had an explicit, determined policy to create such a nation. As in the other Soviet Republics, atheistic propaganda permeated education and social life in Armenia. Any slight practice of devotion to God, in any religion, whether public or private, often met with swift, brutal consequences.

One day in an Armenian mountain village, a typically atheistic engineer, a man well respected in his community, sat outside for a smoke. When a truck came to deliver a package, he and his friend the truck driver talked about news from the city. As the driver carried the package to the engineer's house, the engineer saw an unusual book in the truck: a Russian translation of *Śrī Īśopaniṣad.* Curious, he picked it up.

He looked at the photo of Śrīla Prabhupāda on the back and thought, "How amazing that there is someone like this living on this planet!"

Then he spontaneously fell on the ground to offer obeisance to the photo.

"What is this book?" he asked the returning driver.

"Oh, someone forced it on me. You want it? I don't need it."

The engineer spent the rest of the day absorbed in Prabhupāda's translation of this key *Upaniṣad* of the *Yajur Veda.* In those nineteen verses and commentaries, the engineer found two points he decided to put into practice at once, not only for himself but for his whole family. From that very day, his family, including his six children, became vegans and chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra.*

Brahmānanda Purī's arrest would have most likely resulted in over fifteen years of punishment, and probably eventual execution.

Two years later, the engineer, who was to become an initiated disciple named Brahmānanda Purī Dāsa, was able to meet other devotees of Kṛṣṇa. He learned they were secretly printing spiritual books, often compiling them by hand or with minimal, poor equipment. He offered the use of his large house and cellar for printing. Using a little money from previous book sales and his own savings, he started procuring printing equipment. Since printing was illegal, getting the equipment was not a matter of an open purchase from a store, but involved great risk and ingenuity. Often he had to barter and finagle even to get paper, generally unavailable at any price.

Eventually, Brahmānanda Purī had a full printing press in his cellar. Being the main person responsible for printing forbidden religious books, he was taking the highest risk of all the Soviet devotees. While those producing and selling the books in small quantity were in constant jeopardy of days, months, or even years of torture and imprisonment in jails and psychiatric hospitals, Brahmānanda Purī's arrest would have most likely resulted in over fifteen years of punishment, and probably eventual execution.

After Communism collapsed in the Soviet countries and printing became legal, Brahmānanda Purī printed close to ten million books with very little capital. Today he is one of the key people making the planned Moscow temple a reality. He secures the permits, gets government approval, and moves the process forward.

A Science Student's Discovery

Far from that Armenian village, an atheistic scientist walked through Moscow's streets. It was 1977, and he was then a brilliant graduate student, attending chemistry classes at Moscow State University. The idea that life could be connected with religion was the furthest thing from his imagination. But after the Moscow International Book Fair, at which devotees "lost" some books and leaflets, one of his friends became a vegetarian. He also noticed his friend becoming unusually secretive. The student scientist, under his friend's influence, also gave up meat, fish, and eggs, and read the *Bhagavad-gītā* in Russian, although it was a translation other than Śrīla Prabhupāda's. Soon he discovered the reason behind his friend's newfound furtive behavior. To avoid arrest he was hiding his chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

That scientist, who much later accepted the renounced order and the name Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami, felt shocked when reading the *Gītā.* His father and grandfather held high and respected positions as scientists, and all his family were atheists. Yet the *Gītā* affected him as only one other book—the Gospel of John—had done. After reading the *Gītā,* he felt he couldn't live as he had before. The book presented such a harmonious and beautiful picture of life that it beckoned him to leave an existence he no longer felt satisfying.

He noted, however, that the main difference between reading the Gospel and the *Gītā* was that after the former, he didn't know how to change or what to change. Now, along with the *Gītā,* his friend had given him the practice of the four regulative principles (no intoxication, no illicit sex, no gambling, no meat, fish, or eggs) and the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami's taking up the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is particularly remarkable given that his friend explained nothing about the meaning or nature of the mantra. He simply said that chanting would be good for him. He didn't explain who Kṛṣṇa is. The translation of the *Gītā* he had read used the word Bhagavān (meaning God, full of all opulences) but not Kṛṣṇa. In any case, as a scientist, Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami decided to experiment with the mantra. To his great happiness, it moved him profoundly.

He knew that if he was caught chanting, arrest with torture might follow. So, Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami's first chanting aid was a string of twenty-seven beads instead of the traditional 108, enabling him to hide his *japa* beads quickly if needed.

When his friend took him to meet other devotees, Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami was disappointed. Most were not intellectuals like his associates. He appreciated that they were peaceful people and found much joy from *kīrtana.* He was intrigued and kept chanting, yet did not make a full commitment.

Meeting the KGB

One day as Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami walked to the area where he worked on campus, he got a message that his academic advisor wanted to see him. While walking up the stairs to the office, he saw his advisor, usually bold and outgoing, hastily walking the other way, his face as white as paper.

Trembling, with a choked voice, his advisor said, "Someone wants to see you in my office."

In the office waited a man three times his size. The huge man smiled and then showed his identification—a colonel of the KGB. The student who had remained only remotely connected with the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement had not expected such an encounter. Now, he felt sure he was in deep and dangerous trouble.

The KGB colonel did not even try to reason with the frightened young man.

"You are an educated man, with a bright future and career in front of you. But somehow you got involved with people who are very dangerous. I hope you know that it is your duty to report to us about them. We are not asking very much. But if you do it, your career will prosper. You'll be promoted. If you don't, you may be kicked out of your studies, and you'll have no future. You may even go to

e-Krishna

Profiles of *Kṛṣṇa-related websites*

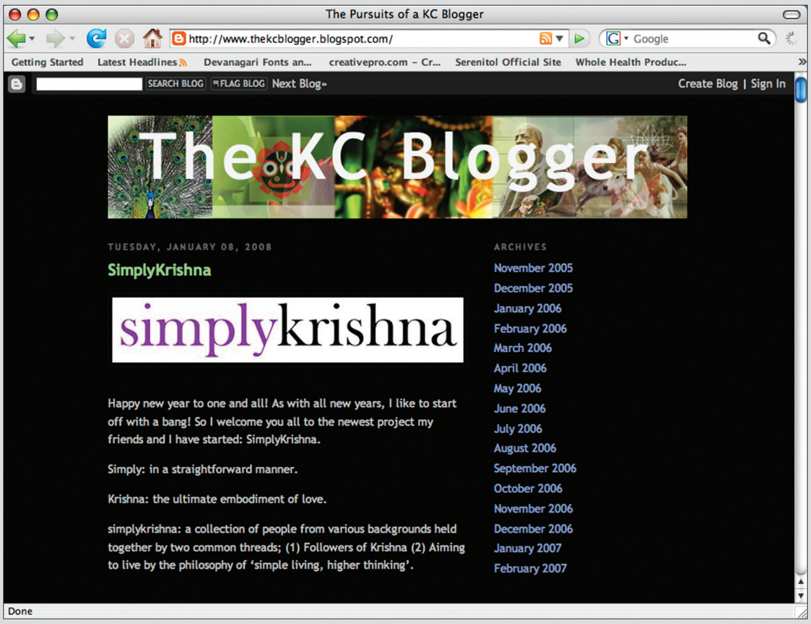
Blogging: Sharing News, Views, And Topics of Kṛṣṇa Online— Blogging has become a popular way to communicate on the internet. You won't find the word *blog* in most dictionaries. It's a relatively new word, derived from the term *web log*. A blog is a website where the author publishes regular entries, as if writing a diary. Blogs can be written about any subject, and many devotees have taken to blogging about Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Many blogs are interactive, allowing the reader to comment on each message the author publishes. On some blogs there are conversations between the authors and the readers. Blogging has become so popular that many online newspapers allow readers to comment on news stories.

Rāsa Rasika Dāsa maintains www.japagroup.blogspot.com.

"I felt it would be constructive to share realizations about *japa* with others," Rāsa says.

He wanted to make a site where devotees can encourage each other in their chanting.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TUESDAY, JANUARY 08, 2008

SimplyKrishna

Happy new year to one and all! As with all new years, I like to start off with a bang! So I welcome you all to the newest project my friends and I have started: SimplyKrishna.

Simply: in a straightforward manner.

Krishna: the ultimate embodiment of love.

simplykrishna: a collection of people from various backgrounds held together by two common threads; (1) Followers of Krishna (2) Aiming to live by the philosophy of 'simple living, higher thinking'.

"I get very positive feedback from many readers," Rāsa says. "Japagroup gets about a thousand visitors a month."

Unable to start a Kṛṣṇa consciousness society at a university, an author calling himself KC Blogger decided to set up a Kṛṣṇa conscious blog.

"I didn't see any websites where people of my age could discuss contemporary issues on a spiritual perspective," he writes, "so I decided to create www.thekcblogger.blogspot.com. People have visited the site from all over the world—Central America, South Africa, Mauritius, Russia, Taiwan, Fiji. The internet is a great resource for advancing our God consciousness."

Caṇḍīdāsa Dāsa has a blog at www.deltaflow.com/.

"Devotees encouraged me to start a blog and express my views and ideas," he says. "It was a good way to tell the world what I was doing. It also provided a way for me to get more devotee association."

Caṇḍīdāsa's blog receives around four thousand visitors a month.

A website maintained by Sītāpati Dāsa—www.planetiskcon.com—draws on blogs from many devotees around the world.

View Krishna.com blogs at www.connect.krishna.com/blog.

If you are interested in starting your own blog, have a look at www.blogger.com/ and www.wordpress.com/.

—by *Antony Brennan*

prison, where all these other people will end up."

He could only reply, "Sir, I cannot give you an answer now."

The KGB man relented slightly.

"Okay, but you have to come to our place in three days to let me know."

The young student dabbling in spiritual life felt fearful.

"What will happen?" he thought. "I'll have no future. I'll go to prison."

But then he had quite a different idea.

"How is it that the KGB takes this chanting so seriously as to send a colonel to threaten me just for a little practice of it? It must be something very powerful and important."

Thus the KGB colonel acted as a type of guru, pushing Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami to delve seriously into spiritual life.

Powerful Advice From a Petite Source

His new determination sat side by side in his heart with the fear of the KGB threat. He decided to consult with one of the more intellectual devotees, a petite nineteen-year-old woman named Mālinī Devī Dāsī. He secretly confided in her about the office encounter.

She laughed and said with strong conviction, "They cannot do anything to you. You are an eternal soul."

Her words struck like lightening.

"They cannot do anything to the real me," he realized.

A wave of calm engulfed him, and the fear vanished.

"This tiny woman has transformed my vision," he concluded.

Later that day he was at his appointment with the KGB, feeling cool and confident.

The secret meeting was in one of the city's international hotels, which were under the government's close watch. In a small room, the colonel and another man sat, smiling.

"So," the colonel said lightly, "did you think about my offer?"

"I am not going to work for you, because it is against my principles."

The colonel jumped from his chair and yelled, "What principles do you stupid fools have besides four regulative? Go home now, but you should know you are finished."

Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami walked calmly out of the room and traveled to the empty apartment a friend had given him in Moscow. He decided all would be fine, somehow or other.

A Fateful Home Festival

His spiritual practices at home became much more serious, and he decided to hold a large festival in his home. The *kirtana* for the festival was exuberant, even roaring. Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami felt good to have hosted such a huge, important celebration. But three days later, half the festival participants were arrested and taken into custody. The officials brought in Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami as a witness to the charges against the devotees. Their so-called interrogation of him was, in fact, torture. The officers recounted to him many details of the festival, including what was said by whom, when, and under what circumstances. To create a fearful atmosphere in which hiding anything would be useless, they wanted to give the impression that they were everywhere and knew everything.

After this incident in 1983, Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami wound up his activities in Moscow because he was in the last year of that part of his studies. He practically ran from Moscow to his hometown to take shelter of his highly placed father and

Japa Retreats

Menla, Catskill Forest, New York

LEVEL ONE: April 16–20 (revised date)
LEVEL TWO: April 22–27 (revised date)
Facilitators: Śacīnandana Swami, Mahātmā Dāsa, Draviḍa Dāsa, Baḍa Haridāsa

For detailed information and to register, visit www.bhagavatlife.com

grandfather. The KGB's hand reached there relentlessly three days later in the form of a letter demanding an appointment.

Each week they required him to come to a meeting where agents psychologically tortured him. He was materially well situated, and they threatened to dismantle his life. The situation was scary, but inevitably during these sessions the sweet voice of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra would come to him. The mantra was unlike the voice of his own mind, and had a powerful effect similar to the courageous words of Mālinī. So, at each meeting he would start off feeling very fearful, and then the mantra would come and he would become calm to the point of laughing inside. At that same moment, the interrogator, who had previously seemed intense, would suddenly become uneasy and timid.

Leaving Russia

After four sessions, Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami decided simply not to go any more. To his amazement, for the next two years he heard nothing from the KGB. He was teaching others about Kṛṣṇa, distributing books, and meeting with people to discuss Kṛṣṇa. He also defended his thesis and got his Ph.D. in molecular biology from the Soviet Academy of Science. Life seemed peaceful.

During this time, an American devotee, Kīrtirāja Dāsa, had been working to help the Soviet devotees. He wanted Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami to translate Prabhupāda's books into Russian because he was the most educated among the devotees. Devotees with little or no formal training in English had done most of the first Russian translations of the scriptures from Prabhupāda's English. Then someone outside Russia who had only a little training in Russian would edit them, using a prerevolution English-to-Russian dictionary. The results were poor from a literary point of view. For example, Prabhupāda's term "devotional service to the Lord" became "devotional slavery," and "servants" of God became "slaves." Even though the books had these types of problems, and were often handmade—pages were missing and the print was hard to decipher—many people took up Kṛṣṇa consciousness by reading them. But Kīrtirāja wanted to bring the Russian books up to a world standard.

If Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami stayed in Russia to translate, he would be under an ever-present threat of arrest. To assure that high-quality book translation could continue unhindered, Kīrtirāja wanted to get Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami to the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust office in Sweden. Through various maneuvers, including having devotees in Sweden fast and protest outside the Russian embassy, Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami was allowed to emigrate to Sweden, where he spent eight years translating Prabhupāda's books into Russian. Today he is one of the key spiritual leaders in the former Soviet bloc and oversees the Moscow temple project.

Throughout the world, the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is growing the fastest in former Soviet bloc countries.

Decades of government-induced atheism in the Soviet bloc simply increased people's hunger for spiritual life. Now that a consumer culture has been introduced, people have become frustrated on both sides. They know that both communism and capitalism are cheating, because material happiness has not increased. To find lasting and expansive happiness that the soul seeks, one must go to the reservoir of pleasure, the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Devotees such as Brahmānanda Purī and Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami are not content to drink alone from that reservoir. They want to bring the opportunity of loving service to Kṛṣṇa to all who thirst for full satisfaction. In Oman, frankincense trees grow out of solid rock. Here in Russia, the most beautiful and fragrant plants of love of God were growing out of unyielding iron. Who had planted such seeds?

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement started from Prabhupāda's three-day visit to Moscow, where he initiated one disciple, Ananta-śānti Dāsa. In that land of scarcity, where a two-hour wait for a little bread or milk was common, people were keen to get for themselves any opulence that others might have.

So, Ananta-śānti would tell whomever he met, "Do you already have a mantra?"

Without knowing what a mantra was, they would say, "No, I don't have one of those."

"Oh, all my friends already chant a mantra. Why don't you do so as well?"

Soon, those he had induced to chant were printing leaflets that explained the chanting from a scientific point of view, also referencing the parapsychology popular in the Soviet Union. At least seventy per cent of the people who read these leaflets started chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. The movement started to swell.

Today, a visit to Russia's annual Hare Kṛṣṇa festival in September puts one in the midst of the largest crowd of devotees of all ISKCON's festivals. Throughout the world, the movement is growing the fastest in former Soviet bloc countries, and it is common for entire extended families—grown children, parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles—to decide together to devote their lives to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Surely it is fitting for these devotees, who have sacrificed more than most even to do simple acts of devotion, to have a place of worship equal to their dedication.

Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī has a Ph.D. in educational leadership from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. She is working on international curriculum projects for primary and secondary education in ISKCON.

A Taste of S

In the former Soviet Union, Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees risked being imprisoned and tortured for distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

The following excerpts are from Sarvabhāvana Dāsa's book Salted Bread, *which focuses on how he and his friend Śacīsuta Dāsa served Lord Kṛṣṇa and spread His teachings in the Soviet Union. These excerpts, drawn from most of the chapters in* Salted Bread, *were selected by BTG Associate Editor Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī, who edited the book.*

The Beginning

I had a very ordinary childhood in Armenia, growing up just like anyone else. My greatest fortune in childhood was to have one very good, close friend I called Sako. We had been vegetarians since fifteen years of age. My fondest dream was to one day take a bath in the sacred Ganges River, visit all the ancient temples, and climb the Himalayan Mountains to meet the great yogis there.

Entering the Spiritual World

My friend Senik took me to the Hare Kṛṣṇa Yerevan center after I got out of the army. I found that I was also singing and clapping my hands with the devotees. I was thinking that it would never end. The cymbals and drums were so harmonious that I felt as if I were in heaven! Everyone in the room was swaying back and forth like waves in an ocean of bliss. Some devotees kept bringing trays of food and ringing tiny bells; they were offering the food to Kṛṣṇa. Soon I noticed that

the fruits I brought were also offered at the altar, and I looked around me to see if anyone else noticed that those were the fruits I had brought.

I do not know how it happened, but I started to lead the singing. What finally forced me to stop was when the police, the KGB, were trying break the door down. Some devotees were running from one room to another and hiding the books, typewriters, and other items.

After some time, the devotees decided to open the door. Five angry men practically flew in and started to scream orders. They started to search everywhere and anywhere; I did not understand what they were looking for so eagerly.

They started to register everyone's names and check their documents. After everything cooled down, the devotees started to serve the sanctified food, *prasādam,* as if nothing had happened just five minutes ago.

"I'm sorry about last night," a devotee told me the next morning. "Did the KGB write down your name?"

"Yes, they did."

"So, that means you are already one of us. You are a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee!"

"I don't mind," I said.

All the devotees, including myself, started to laugh softly.

Right Time for Decision, And On the Way to Kṛṣṇa

As soon as I entered the doorway of my home after my return journey, I found that the KGB had come and searched our house. Soon, Sako and then I moved into the Yeravan center.

My New Lifestyle

Sako encouraged me to distribute books. So, I tried it. The first time in my life I offered a book to a young

alted Bread

university student, he took it happily. But the second man read a little bit and then threw it in my face. He told me the Hare Kṛṣṇas are crazy and one of his relatives had taken to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

He shouted, "And he is a totally crazy man—he is not eating meat, eggs, and fish, not even alcohol! What kind of madness is that? God created everything for us to enjoy, and this stupid guy is saying that he cannot eat with his friends!"

I felt miffed but did not lose my enthusiasm from the first man, and I continued to distribute more.

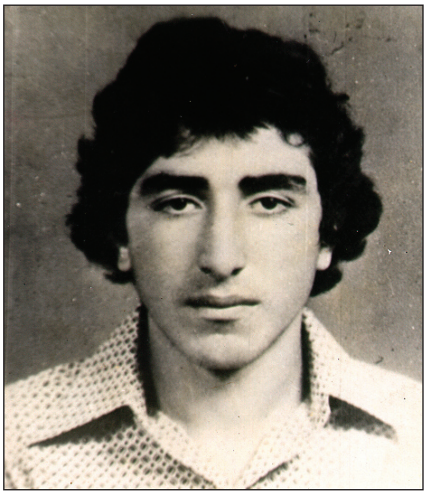
The only problem I had now was that I did not want the police to disturb my parents, but it was practically impossible because my name and address were already on the blacklist. Two or three months after I moved into the temple, I heard that police were starting to arrest devotees and put them in jail in Russia.

Everyone became tigers—starting to print and distribute even more flyers and books. One day after distribution, all the devotees looked as if they were celebrating something. We quickly went inside and saw the Russian *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Coming Back* in Armenian.

I asked our leader, Sannyāsa Dāsa, if I could look at them, but he told me, "They should be used as originals from which to print more. So it is better if we do not touch them and possibly leave any fingerprints on the pages or pictures."

In a few weeks, Sannyāsa brought us the first printed pages of the *Gītā*. After that he taught us how to fold, and we all sat down to fold all the pages in order to make a book. We applied glue to the side of the set of pages, pressed it into the cover, and placed it under some heavy suitcases next to the heater so that it would dry quickly. After it was dried, Sannyāsa marked it with a pencil cutting line. He then started to cut the excess paper with a razor blade and metal ruler.

Soon our first handmade book was ready. One devotee wanted to open and read from it, but another grabbed it from his hand and told him that we have to first offer it to guru and



Persecuted for being a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee, Śacīsuta Dāsa (left) died in a Soviet labor camp. Before becoming a devotee, Sarvabhāvana Dāsa (below) served in the Russian Army. Opposite page: the Sovetashens Prison, where seven Armenian devotees, including Śacīsuta and Sarvabhāvana, were held. (The red circle indicates Sarvabhāvana's cell.)

Kṛṣṇa, then only could we see it ourselves. So after placing it on the altar, we started an ecstatic and unusual *kīrtana.* At that time I didn't realize the full significance of what was going on in that little room on the ninth floor and what a very special sacrifice I was participating in. After many years, I understood that we were actually founding a powerful mission in the USSR. I did not know at that time that these books would make a revolution and that after only ten to fifteen years there would be hundreds of temples and thousands of Kṛṣṇa devotees in the Soviet Union just because of these small handmade books.

My First Arrest

Soon, Sannyāsa filled a room full of printed pages of *Bhagavad-gītā,* and everybody was busy folding them and turning them into hundreds of bound copies of Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings. It was ecstatic to see how our first book came out of that room and was sold right across the street. Sannyāsa was telling us that we should all learn each step of the operation perfectly so that if one devotee was not there, the others could do his part. He meant that if one devotee got arrested, then the others could carry on. We were trying not to speak too much about this subject, but at the same time, it was impossible to avoid it. Almost every day the police would catch some devotees, beat them up, take all the books, and then free them after hours or days.

No one said it, but everyone was thinking that he or she might be the next one to be arrested.

I was thinking in that way also: "What if they catch me? What am I going to do? What will I tell them?"

When I first started distributing books, I would sometimes be brought to meet people who were retyping the books with carbon paper to make four copies. They would be doing this in a secret room because in Armenia you could not own a typewriter or a photocopier openly unless you had a special permit, which was not easy to obtain. And they were typing very slowly with one or two fingers.

When I asked them what they were doing, they would say, "So many people asked me if they could borrow this book, but I didn't want to lend it out because who knows when I would get it back. So, I am making four copies."

I would say, "Why didn't you just ask for more?"

Their jaw would drop, and they would say, "There's more?" as if they never thought that there would be more.

We started to send books to Russia by post. For some time it worked out well, until the KGB found out about it. They made a new rule that a package of more than a certain size and weight was subject to inspection.

Then we started to smuggle books out of Armenia in trucks. We contacted people who brought goods to Armenia and took other materials back to Russia. They knew how to hide our boxes in the front of the truck behind other goods.

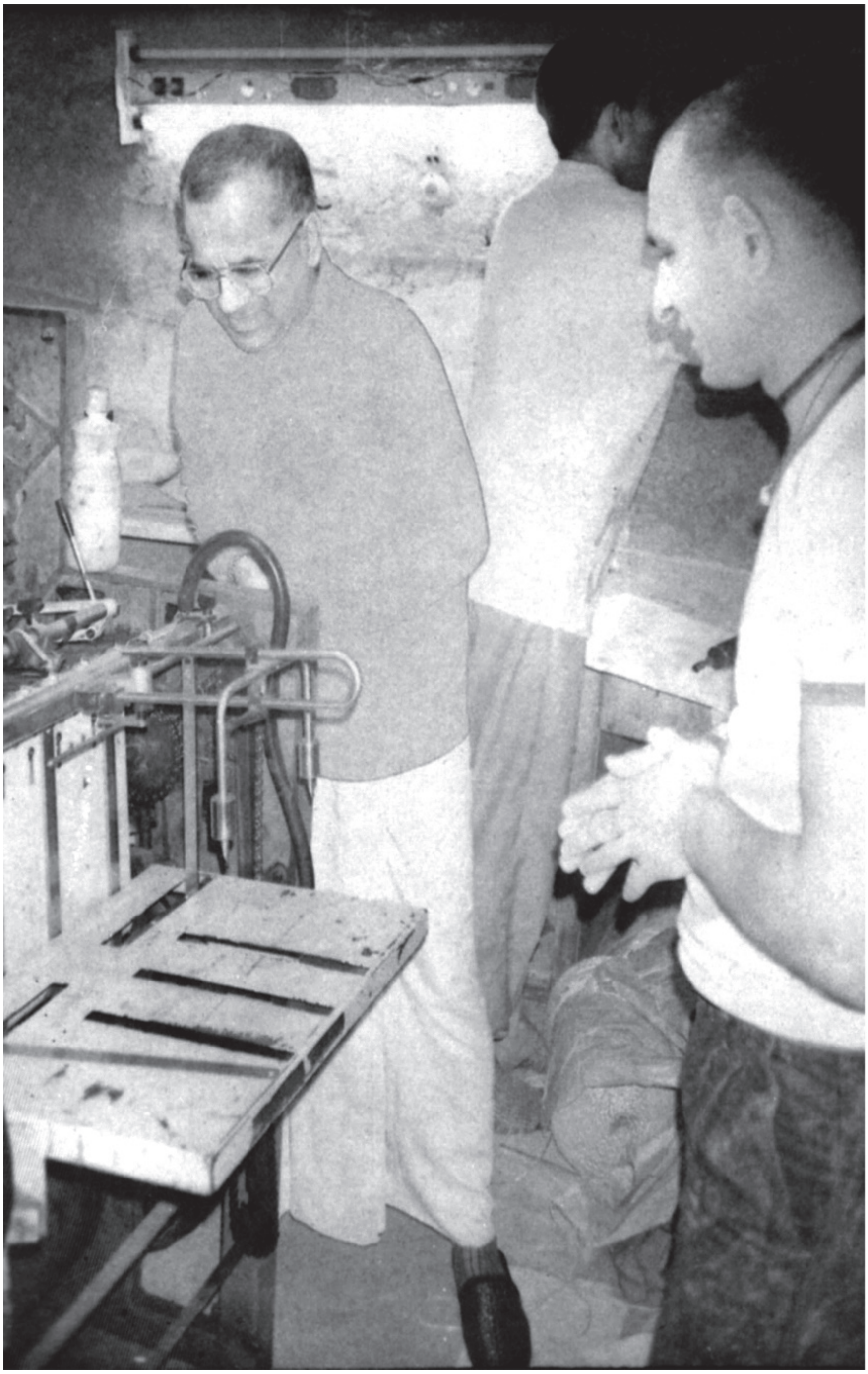
One morning after breakfast, I accidentally offered a book to a man on the street who happened to be a KGB agent. He started to ask many more questions, which made me feel that something was fishy, but I did not know what to do.

He took out his police identification and said, "Place your hands behind your back and follow me."

This was the first time that I was made to walk with my hands behind my back. I had only seen this kind of imposition in the movies, and just a year before I would never have believed that one day I would be treated in that way, too.

I started to chant the *mahā-mantra* in my mind while walking through the police station. I could hear someone screaming. One of the policemen was very fat and ugly; another one was skinny and smiling at me. That is usually the tactic of the police; later on I became very familiar with it. One is beating you

ВНЕ ВРЕМЕНИ И ПРОСТРАНСТВА



During the Soviet era (left), Sarvabhāvana Dāsa watches as Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, ISKCON governing body commissioner for the USSR, prints out a page of the Armenian Bhagavad-gītā As It Is *on an underground press. Opposite page: Russian and Armenian books printed underground.*

up, and another one is gently asking questions.

In Every Town and Village

This type of short arrest became a common event. Many of the devotees had been arrested several times and went through what they had to. In each arrest the KGB confiscated books, which we were spending so much time and effort to make, plus the cash collected from the books. As for the devotees, many were leaving the temple or not coming to the temple, because they did not want to be arrested.

More and more, many devotees came to Armenia from different parts of the USSR to get Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and flyers.

One devotee said, "It would be wise if you Armenian devotees did not go out and distribute books at all. Just print and bind good quality books for us, and we will come here, take them from you, and distribute them for you as well. If they arrest you, then where will we get the books?"

Another devotee said, "Devotees are making photocopies of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and binding and distributing them from home. Some of the devotees do not have the original books, so what they produce is a fifth or sixth photocopy, which is hardly readable. Sometimes the pages are mixed up and one cannot find the right page. But people still buy them from devotees because they thirst for those books."

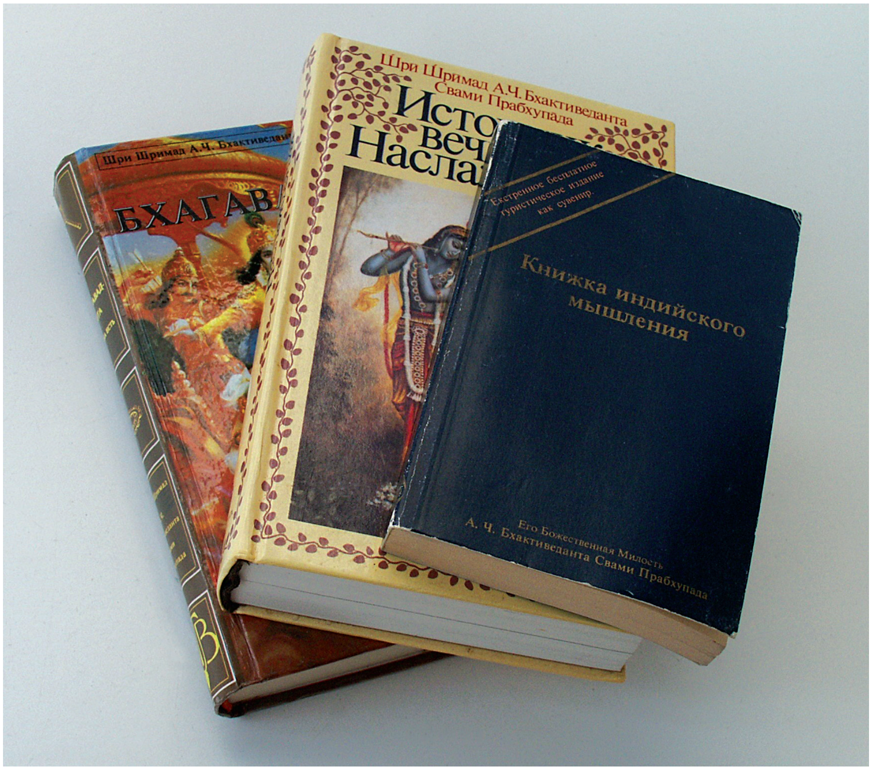
Preaching is the Essence

Sako, who later received the initiated name Śacīsuta Dāsa, returned from book distribution. He started to glue some books and pack some of the Russian books in a box to be shipped. The atmosphere was peaceful, with some devotees singing a sweet *kīrtana.* Some were talking about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and some others were cooking.

Then, all of a sudden someone started to scream, "The KGB is here!"

After the fourth day, it was clear to all of us that the KGB had already taken our leaders to the jail from the police station. Having our leaders in jail was so depressing that sometimes we would not go out for days, only chanting, eating, and sleeping. The only person who was doing some active work was Śacīsuta—he was making more and more books ready for distribution and hardly ever talking with us. He was serious, and it was as if he was in a different world. He was often the only one who would

At an ISKCON temple in India (right), devotees enact a theatrical version of the book Salted Bread. *Below: current Russian editions of* Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, Kṛṣṇa, *and* Śrī Īśopaniṣad.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Исто Веч Насла
Экстренное бесплатное туристическое издание как сувенир.
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БХАГАВ

clean the floor, do the shopping, wash the pots after cooking, and so on.

My Last Arrest

I had forgotten how many times they had arrested and released me, but at the time of Sannyāsa and Kamalamālā's arrest, I thought that because the police were now convinced they had the leaders of our movement in Armenia, they wouldn't be arresting the rest of us anymore. But I was wrong. The police arrested me and some other devotees many times after that. During this time, we rented another house to store books and important items, and we would go there perhaps once a week.

At about eight o'clock one evening, Śacīsuta and I were going to that house, bringing some missing *Gītā* pages to complete the books. At that time I had a strange premonition while riding on the bus. I asked Śacīsuta if he had the same feeling. He said that he also felt that there was some danger, but we did not know what to do and which way to go, forward or backward.

Both of us had such strong feelings of danger that we decided to go back without taking any further pages for the books. I do not remember any other incident of Śacīsuta's stepping back from any situation, ever.

Once we were arrested, one fat policeman hurt me the most, even stomping on my toes with his boots, giving me excruciating pain.

"So," he said while hurting me, "now I think you can tell us where your books are printed and where you are storing them."

"I do not know, sir," I said. "I really

do not know. I told you that many times already."

"Okay, after I prepare a nice seat, then you will tell us everything immediately."

He waved his hand to the policeman next to him and asked him to bring one beer bottle. Then he came close to me and with his whole strength stepped on the tip of my toes with his big boots.

"O God," I thought, "this is one of the worst things I have ever experienced."

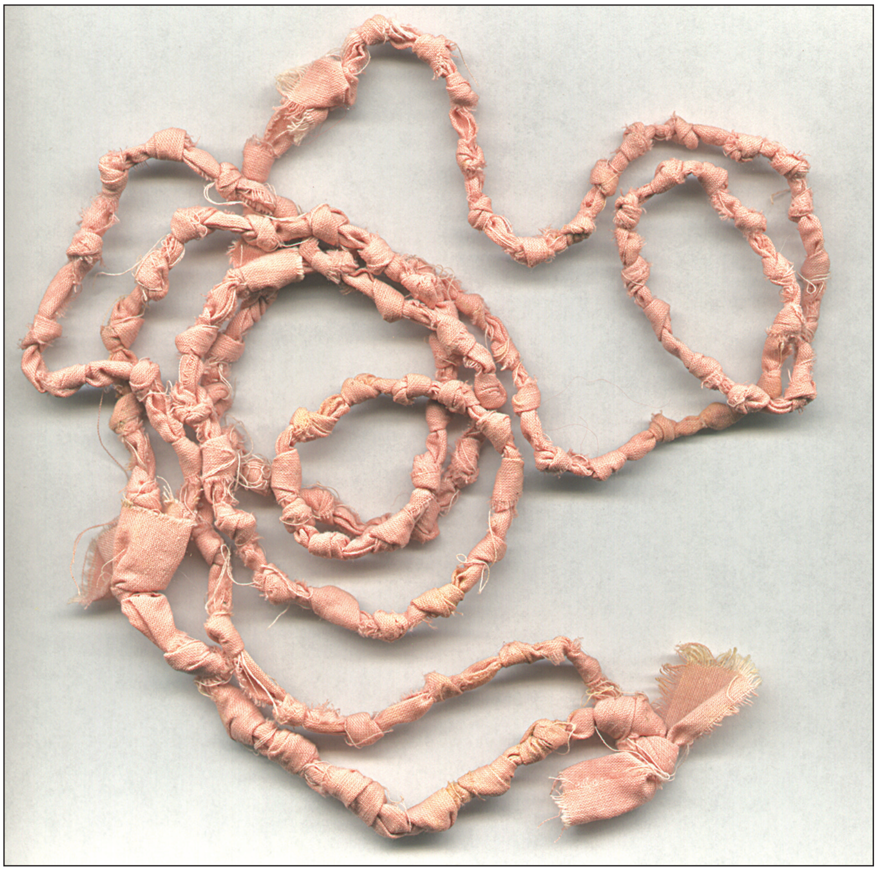
Then a policeman came in with a glass bottle in his hand and placed it in the middle of the room.

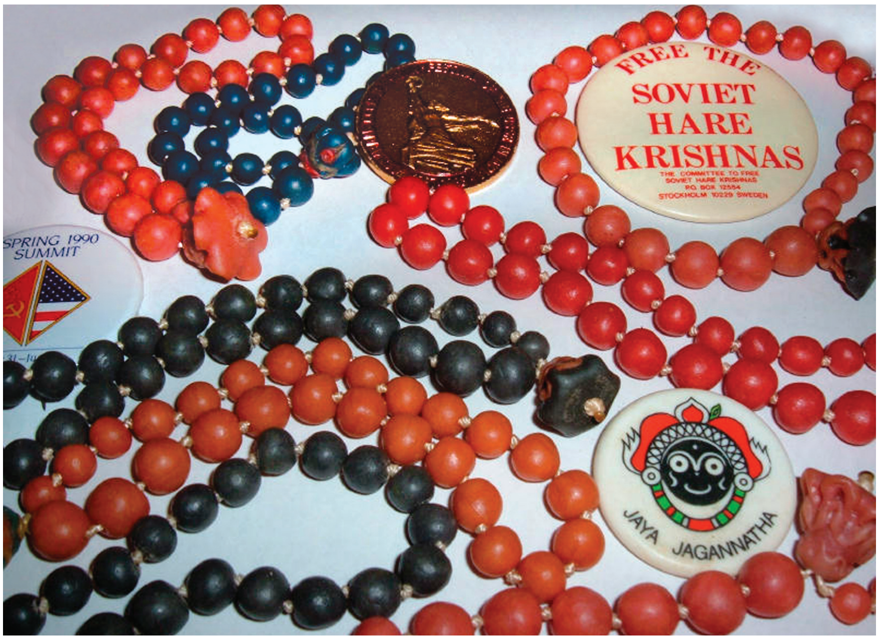
"So now for the last time I am asking you, and that's it. Either you will tell me or you are going to sit on this bottle."

I hung my head and started to chant loudly, "*Namaste narasiṁhaya,*" and prayed for help.

Then he came and twisted my hands while another one held my legs, and they pulled me up. The third one came and tried to take off my belt. I had started to jump and shake my whole body so they wouldn't be able to take my pants off. So then he hit me, probably with his full power, on my belly, and I thought that maybe now I'll be cut into two pieces. But still I didn't give up shaking.

I started to kick them and scratch as much as I could. I tore the shirt of the policeman who was holding my hands, which made him even angrier. Somehow, even after so much beating, I got some enormous amount of power and started to move in such a way that they could not take my pants down. I started to scream louder than I had ever screamed in my life, like a tiger, nonstop for a long time. I started to think how loudly Nṛsiṁhadeva screamed when He appeared to kill the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu. As soon as they brought me close to the bottle, I moved fast and it fell on its side. After several times of trying, they finally dropped me down and left the room.

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Devotees imprisoned in the USSR made chanting beads out of cloth (above) or bread, while those on the outside made beads out of other materials, such as plastic and resin (right).

In 1998, Armenian devotees prepared prasādam *for victims of an earthquake in Gyumri (then known as Leninakan).*

They took me downstairs and locked me up in one of many rooms. Some criminals were in the room, too, and they started to ask me many questions. Some of them had already heard about Kṛṣṇa, and one had even read the *Bhagavad-gītā* a little bit.

Entering Hell

I used to take only a piece of bread and one spoonful of sugar in the morning. The bread was of a very substandard quality. It was black and wet, and if you pressed it hard, water would drip out of it. So, I kept the bread on the window for three or four days until it was dried and crunchy, and then ate it. I learned how to make *japa* beads out of bread.

One morning, a guard used my beads to strike my face and body until he was exhausted. Those *japa* beads had been my only possession, for which I had saved so many pieces of bread. Soon we realized that even fifty-four beads were too risky to keep, so we started to make twenty-seven-bead strings. Being smaller, they were easier to hide from antagonistic persons. The difference was just that we had to chant four times in order to make 108, or one round. Sometimes, I even used a nine-bead set, keeping it almost all the time in my hand.

After a while, everyone in the jail knew about Kṛṣṇa. Some people from the other cells started to ask me and the other devotees questions. Soon, offering food before eating became a tradition in our cell. Everyone in the jail was taking *prasādam* from the devotees. Even people who were against Kṛṣṇa consciousness ate something out of our offerings. Many of the inmates told me that they could actually tell the difference between offered and nonoffered food.

Who Is Crazy?

One day, we moved into a psychiatric hospital. I could not believe that the person in front of me was the same Sannyāsa I knew before. He was so skinny! He moved slowly and slurred his speech. His chin had become sharp, and his eyes sunk in. His beautiful face, which had some beard growth, was very white. About one month before my coming, they started to give devotees daily injections by force of a neuro-psychological drug. Sometimes while he was talking, Sannyāsa's mouth would become dry and his eyes would roll like a drunk man. Sometimes he would sit and look at one spot for a long time without making a movement or saying anything. After a while, he would stand up and shake as if he were cold. Sannyāsa is a very strong personality, and no matter what happened and what condition he was in, he would every day complete chanting his sixteen rounds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*—a determination that surprised me and inspired me with more energy to go on. After some time, they took us back to the jail to wait for trial.

Unwanted Days

In my new jail, the worst guard was a very rough, sweaty man. He shouted, "Today you will tell me exactly where you were printing your books and who was printing them for you. I know you did not tell it

In 1989, Kīrtirāja Dāsa (above, second from left), then ISKCON's regional secretary for the Soviet Union, accompanied Armenian devotees during their historic arrival at the Kolkata airport. The Armenian devotees (from left): Ātmānanda Dāsa, Kamalamālā Dāsa, and Sannyāsa Dāsa. At left: Sarvabhāvana Dāsa and his family on the Yamuna River in Vṛndāvana.

to anyone, but you will tell me today, only me. Do you understand that?"

He took his baton and beat me very severely on my forehead and temples. Then he hit me once with most probably his full energy. The blow sent me flying to the other end of the room, and I fell down with heavy bleeding from my nose and mouth. Then he came close to me and started to kick my back and chest so hard that I lost consciousness and do not remember anything whatsoever after that. I opened my eyes after some time and saw him dragging my body on the floor. He was cursing me and stomping on my stomach and face mercilessly. To protect my face, I turned. As soon as I had turned, he kicked my spine and I went unconscious again. Everything became black. My ears were blocked completely, and only some kind of a strange sound was constantly whistling in my ears. Then he threw me into my cell and closed the door with a curse.

The only lasting misfortune was my chronic spinal pain and eye problem. The lack of vision was a huge change in my life, and I had to get used to my new situation. I would have to go through life half-blind and almost disabled.

The devotees had paid three times the usual bribe at that time to send us a parcel full of wonderful *prasādam.* One prisoner was breaking up the bread when he found letters secretly hidden in it. They encouraged us to be strong, never forget Kṛṣṇa, and continue to chant and follow the rules as much as possible in our difficult situation. Tears were running down my cheeks while reading their sincere sentiments, and my hands were shaking.

The Court Decision

After our trial, we were sent to Siberia to a labor camp where I spent the rest of my sentence.

Conclusion

After ISKCON's registration, many conditions changed in the USSR. But that registration was not so easy to get. It was the result of countless demonstrations in front of many buildings and in various streets of Moscow. Generally, during these demonstrations there was some conflict with police and many devotees got arrested.

In 1989, for the first time in history, a group of fifty devotees were allowed by the Russian government to go to India for a pilgrimage. Most of them had been tortured by the KGB some months before. A two-month tour was organized. I was fortunate to be part of that historic pilgrimage. Just a year before, I was suffering in a jail, but now we were chanting and dancing with hundreds of devotees from all over the world.

ISKCON's Rādhā-Govinda Temple in Kolkata was the first real temple we had ever seen. There was a reception waiting for us, and thousands of flowers fell from the balcony on all the Soviet devotees. We slowly came up the stairs and entered the temple.

The moonlike faces of Rādhā and Govinda were smiling at all of us as if to say, "Finally you are home. There is no KGB here, so please chant and dance as much as you like." ❁

Salted Bread *is available from the Krishna.com store.*

QUEST TO CREATE LIFE

(*continued from page 19*)

being done. A painter simply imitates what he sees, that's all. Therefore, art and science are two different departments.

Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Swami: So if they create something synthetic, that is just an art.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. For example, a good cook knows how to mix the spices and condiments and make very tasteful things. So you can call a chemist a good cook. Chemistry is nothing but the art of mixing different chemicals, that's all. There is oil, there is alkaline, you mix it very professionally, and soap comes out—very useful.

Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Swami: But the scientists are convinced that somehow they'll be able to create life and even make a human being.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: This is not a problem, that without your creation of life the world will go to hell. Life is already there. For instance, there are so many motorcars—if I manufacture another motorcar, is there any great credit for me? So many motorcars are already there! When there were no motorcars, the first man who manufactured one had some credit. "Yes, you have done something nice—a horseless carriage. People will benefit from it—a convenience—that's all right." But when there are millions and millions of motorcars simply creating accidents, and I manufacture another motorcar, what is my credit?

Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Swami: Zero.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Zero. And to achieve this "zero," they are going to hold some big conference, and so many people will come and spend money.

Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Swami: They want to make a better human being. They want to make life better.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, that is our proposal. We say to the scientists, "Don't waste time trying to make life. Try to make your life better. Try to understand what your actual spiritual identity is, so that you may become happy in this lifetime. This research should be done."

The first thing they have to learn is that there is a driver, or soul, within the "motorcar" of the body. This is the first point of knowledge. Unless one understands this simple thing, he's no different from an animal. The driver—the soul—is moving the motorcar of this body. And if the driver is educated, then he can move his body for self-realization, so that he can go home, back to Godhead. Then he becomes perfect. So we are educating the driver—we are not trying to manufacture another tin car. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. ❁

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Mangalore, Karnataka — Sri Jagannath Mandir, near Hotel Woodlands, Bunts Hostel Rd., 575 003 (mail: P. O. Box 15, Mangalore 575 001)/ Tel. (0824) 2423326 or 2442756/ iskconmangalore@yahoo.com
◆ **Mayapur, WB —** ISKCON, Shree Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir, Shree Mayapur Dham, Dist. Nadia, 741 313/ Tel. (03472) 245239, 245240, or 245233/ Fax: (03472) 245238/ mayapur.chandrodaya@pamho.net
Moirang, Manipur — Nongban Enkhol, Tidim Rd./ Tel. 795133
•◆ **Mumbai (Bombay), Maharashtra —** Hare Krishna Land, Juhu 400 049/ Tel. (022) 26206860/ Fax: (022) 26205214/ info@iskconmumbai.com; guest.house.bombay@pamho.net
•◆ **Mumbai, Maharashtra —** 7 K. M. Munshi Marg, Chowpatty 400 007/ Tel. (022) 23665500/ Fax: (022) 23665555/ info@radhagopinath.com
Mumbai, Maharashtra — Shristhi Complex, Mira Rd. (E), opposite Royal College, Dist. Thane, 401 107/ Tel. (022) 28454667 or 28454672/ Fax: (022) 28454981/ jagjivan.gkg@pamho.net
Mysore, Karnataka — #31, 18th Cross, Jayanagar, 570 014/ Tel. (0821) 2500582 or 6567333/ mysore.iskcon@gmail.com
Nagpur, Maharashtra — Bharatwada Rd., Near Golmohar Nagar, Ramanuja Nagar, Kalamana Market, Nagpur 440 008/ Tel. 0937015638 or 9371064102 or 9423635311/ iskcon.nagpur@pamho.net
Nellore, AP — ISKCON City, Hare Krishna Rd., 524 004/ Tel. (0861) 2314577 or (092155) 36589/ sukadevaswami@gmail.com
•◆ **New Delhi, UP —** Hare Krishna Hill, Sant Nagar Main Road, East of Kailash, 110 065/ Tel. (011) 2623-5133, 4, 5, 6, 7/ Fax: (011) 2621-5421/ delhi@pamho.net; (Guesthouse) neel.sunder@pamho.net
• **New Delhi, UP —** 41/77, Punjabi Bagh (West), 110 026/ Tel. (011) 25222851 or 25227478
Noida, UP — A-5, Sector 33, opp. NTPC office, Noida 201 301/ Tel. (0120) 2506211/ vraja.bhakti.vilas.lok@pamho.net
Pandharpur, Maharashtra — Hare Krishna Dhama, East Bank of Chandrabhaga River, Pandharpur 413 304, Distr. Solapur/ Tel. (02186) 267242 or 267266 or 9423335991/ iskcon.pandharpur@pamho.net
Patna, Bihar — Arya Kumar Rd., Rajendra Nagar, 800 016/ Tel. (0612) 687637 or 685081/ Fax: (0612) 687635/ krishna.kripa.jps@pamho.net
Pune, Maharashtra — 4 Tarapoor Rd., Camp, 411 001/ Tel. (020) 26332328 or 26361855/ iyfpune@vsnl.com
Puri, Orissa — Bhakti Kuti, Swargadwar, 752 001/ Tel. (06752) 231440
Raipur, Chhatisgarh — Hare Krishna Land, Alopi Nagar, Opposite Maharshi Vidyalaya, Tatibandh, Raipur 492 001/ Tel. (0771) 5037555/ iskconraipur@yahoo.com
Rajkot, Gujarat — Sri Sri Radha Neelmadhav, Dham Kalawad Rd., Opposite Kankot Patiya, Mota Mava/ Tel. (0281) 2783651
Ranaghat, WB — Gourdham, Habibpur, Ranaghat, Dist. Nadia 741 403/ Tel. (03473) 281150 or 281226/ shyamrup.jps@pamho.net
Salem, TN — ISKCON, Hare Krishna Land, Karuppur 636 012/ Tel. (0427) 2001686/ iskcon.salem@pamho.net
Secunderabad, AP — 27 St. John's Rd., 500 026/ Tel. (040) 780-5232/ Fax: (040) 814021
Silchar, Assam — Ambikapatti, Silchar, Dist. Cachar, 788 004/ Tel. (03842) 34615
Siliguri, WB — ISKCON Road, Gitalpara, 734 406/ Tel. (0353) 426619, 539046, or 539082/ Fax: (0353) 526130
Solapur, Maharashtra — C-29/49 Naganaath Laghudyog Society, Near Karnik Nagar, Behind Yalialinga Math, Solapur 413 006/ Tel. (098) 9012 8619/ ekalavyadas@yahoo.com
Sri Rangam, TN — 103 Amma Mandapam Rd., Sri Rangam, Trichy 620 006/ Tel. (0431) 2433945/ iskcon_srirangam@yahoo.com.in
Surat, Gujarat — Rander Rd., Jahangirpura, 395 005/ Tel. (0261) 765891 or 765516 or 773386/ surat@pamho.net
• **Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum), Kerala —** Hospital Rd., Thycaud, 695 014/ Tel. (0471) 2328197/ jsdasa@yahoo.co.in
◆ **Tirupati, AP —** K.T. Rd., Vinayaka Nagar, 517 507/ Tel. (0877) 2230114 or 2230009/ revati.raman.jps@pamho.net (guesthouse: iskcon_ashram@yahoo.co.in)
Udhampur, J&K — Srila Prabhupada Ashram, Srila Prabhupada Marg, Srila Prabhupada Nagar 182 101/ Tel. (01992) 270298/ info@iskconudhampur.com
Ujjain, MP — Hare Krishna Land, Bharatpuri, 456 010/ Tel. (0734) 2521020 or 2535000 or 2531000/ iskcon.ujjain@pamhho.net
Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat — Opp. B&B Polytechnic, Mota Bazaar, Ananda, 388 120/ Tel. (02692) 230796 or 233012/ iskcon.vvnagar@pamho.net
Varanasi, UP — ISKCON, B 27/80 Durgakund Rd., Near Durgakund Police Station, Varanasi 221 010/ Tel. (0542) 246422 or 222617
Vijayawada, AP — Venkatapalem Karakatta Rd., Undavalli Village, Tadepalli Mandaal, Vijayawada, Guntur Dist. 522 501/ Tel. (08645) 272513/ mmdasiskconvijayawada@gmail.com
Visakhapatnam, AP — Hare Krishna land, Sagaranagar 530 045 (mail: ISKCON, D. No. 7-5-108, Pandurangapuram Beach Rd., 530 003)/ Tel. (0891)2528376/ samba.jps@pamho.net
◆ **Vrindavan, UP —** Krishna-Balaram Mandir, Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg, Raman Reti, Mathura Dist., 281 124/ Tel. & Fax: (0565) 2540728/ iskcon.vrindavan@pamho.net; (Guesthouse:) Tel. (0565) 2540022; ramamani@sancharnet.in
Yamunanagar, Haryana — ISKCON Hare Krishna Dham, Hare Krishna Marg, Raghunathpuri, Yamunanagar 135 001/ Tel. (01732) 321001 or (mobile) 09355330775/ vishu_bakshi05@yahoo.co.in
Warangal, AP — Mulugu Rd., Ayappa Pidipally, 506 007/ Tel. (08712) 426182

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Ahmedabad District, Gujarat (Hare Krishna Farm) — Katwada (contact ISKCON Ahmedabad)
Assam — Karnamadhu, Dist. Karimganj
Chamorshi, Maharashtra — 78 Krishnanagar Dham, Distr. Gadhachiroli, 442 603/ Tel. (0218) 623473
Hyderabad, AP (New Naimisaranya Farm) — P. O. Dabilpur Village, Medchal Tq., R.R. Distr., 501 401/ Tel. (040) 65520070 or 9440057263/ naimisaranya@pamho.net
Indore, MP (Krishna-Balarama Mandir) — Hare Krishna Vihar, Nipania Village/ Tel. (0731) 572794
Karnataka (Bhaktivedanta Eco-Village) — Nagodi P.O., Vollur Valley, Hosanagar Taluq, Shivmoga District, 577 425 (mail: Garuda Guha, Kollur, D.K. District, 576 220)

Many temples have their own website, which you can find at our online directory: http://directory.krishna.com

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Mayapur, WB — (contact ISKCON Mayapur)
Puri, Orissa — ISKCON, Bhaktivedanta Ashram, Sipasirubuli, 752 001/ Tel. (06752) 230494
Surat, Gujarat — Bhaktivedanta Rajavidyalaya, Krishnalok, Surat-Bardoli Rd. Gangapur, P. O. Gangadhara, Dist. Surat, 394 310/ Tel. (02622) 63546
Vrindavan, UP — Vrinda Kund, Nandagaon, Dist. Mathura, U.P.

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANT

Kolkata, WB — Govinda's, ISKCON House, 22 Gurusaday Rd., 700 019/ Tel. (033) 24756922, 24749009

CANADA

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Edmonton, Alberta — 9353 35th Ave. NW, T6E 5R5/ Tel. (780) 439-9999/ edmonton@harekrishnatemple.com
Montreal, Quebec — 1626 Pie IX Boulevard, H1V 2C5/ Tel. & fax: (514) 521-1301/ iskconmontreal@bellnet.ca
◆ **Ottawa, Ontario** — 212 Somerset St. E., K1N 6V4/ Tel. (613) 565-6544/ Fax: (613) 565-2575/ iskconottawa@sympatico.ca
Regina, Saskatchewan — 1279 Retallack St., S4T 2H8/ Tel. (306) 525-1640
Toronto, Ontario — 243 Avenue Rd., M5R 2J6/ Tel. (416) 922-5415/ Fax: (416) 922-1021/ toronto@iskcon.net
Vancouver, B.C. — 5462 S.E. Marine Dr., Burnaby V5J 3G8/ Tel. (604) 433-9728/ Fax: (604) 648-8715; Govinda's Bookstore & Cafe: (604) 433-7100 or (888) 433-8722/ akrura@krishna.com

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Ashcroft, B.C. — Saranagati Dhama (mail: P.O. Box 99, V0K 1A0)/ iskconsaranagati@hotmail.com

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Atlanta, Georgia — 1287 South Ponce de Leon Ave., N.E., 30306/ Tel. & fax: (404) 377-8680/ bala108@earthlink.net
Austin, Texas — 10700 Jonwood Way, 78753/ Tel. (512) 835-2121/ Fax: (512) 835-8479/ sda@backtohome.com
Baltimore, Maryland — 200 Bloomsbury Ave., Catonsville, 21228/ Tel. (410) 719-1776/ Fax: (410) 799-0642/ info@baltimorekrishna.com
Berkeley, California — 2334 Stuart Street, 94705/ Tel. (510) 649-8619/ Fax: (510) 665-9366
Boise, Idaho — 1615 Martha St., 83706/ Tel. (208) 344-4274/ boise_temple@yahoo.com
Boston, Massachusetts — 72 Commonwealth Ave., 02116/ Tel. (617) 247-8611/ acyutadasa.nrs@gmail.com
◆ **Chicago, Illinois** — 1716 W. Lunt Ave., 60626/ Tel. (773) 973-0900/ Fax: (773) 973-0526/ information@iskconchicago.com
Columbus, Ohio — 379 W. Eighth Ave., 43201/ Tel. (614) 421-1661/ Fax: (614) 294-0545/ rmanjari@sbcglobal.net
◆ **Dallas, Texas** — 5430 Gurley Ave., 75223/ Tel. (214) 827-6330/ Fax: (214) 823-7264/ txkrishnas@aol.com; restaurant: vegetariantaste@aol.com
◆ **Denver, Colorado** — 1400 Cherry St., 80220/ Tel. (303) 333-5461/ Fax: (303) 321-9052/ info@krishnadenver.com
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Gainesville, Florida — 214 N.W. 14th St., 32603/ Tel. (352) 336-4183/ Fax: (352) 379-2927/ kalakantha.acbsp@pamho.net
Hartford, Connecticut — 1683 Main St., E. Hartford, 06108/ Tel. & fax: (860) 289-7252/ pyari@sbcglobal.net
◆ **Honolulu, Hawaii** — 51 Coelho Way, 96817/ Tel. (808) 595-3947/ tejaprakash@gmail.com
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Laguna Beach, California — 285 Legion St., 92651/ Tel. (949) 494-7029/ info@lagunatemple.com
Las Vegas, Nevada — Govinda's Center of Vedic India, 6380 S. Eastern Ave., Suite 8, 89120/ Tel. (702) 434-8332/ info@govindascenter.com
◆ **Los Angeles, California** — 3764 Watseka Ave., 90034/ Tel. (310) 836-2676/ Fax: (310) 839-2715/ shastra.krit@pamho.net
◆ **Miami, Florida** — 3220 Virginia St., 33133/ Tel. (305) 442-7218/ Fax: (305) 444-7145/ devotionalservice@iskcon-miami.org
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New York, New York — 26 Second Avenue, 10003/ Tel. (212) 253-6182/ krishnanyc@gmail.com
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — 41 West Allens Lane, 19119/ Tel. (215) 247-4600/ Fax: (215) 247-8702/ iskconphilly@aol.com
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — 1408 South St., 19146/ Tel. (215) 985-9303/ savecows@aol.com
Phoenix, Arizona — 100 S. Weber Dr., Chandler, 85226/ Tel. (480) 705-4900/ Fax: (480) 705-4901/ svgd108@yahoo.com
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◆ **Spanish Fork, Utah** — Krishna Temple Project & KHQN Radio, 8628 S. State Road, 84660/ Tel. (801) 798-3559/ Fax: (810) 798-9121/ carudas@earthlink.net
Tallahassee, Florida — 1323 Nylic St., 32304/ Tel. & fax: (850) 224-3803/ darudb@hotmail.com
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◆ **Tucson, Arizona** — 711 E. Blacklidge Dr., 85719/ Tel. (520) 792-0630/ Fax: (520) 791-0906/ tucphx@cs.com
Washington, D.C. — 10310 Oaklyn Dr., Potomac, Maryland 20854/ Tel. (301) 299-2100/ Fax: (301) 299-5025/ ad@pamho.net

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Carriere, Mississippi (New Talavan) — 31492 Anner Road, 39426/ Tel. (601) 749-9460 or 799-1354/ Fax: (601) 799-2924/ talavan@hughes.net
Gurabo, Puerto Rico (New Govardhana Hill) — Carr. 181, Km. 16.3, Bo. Santa Rita, Gurabo (mail: HC-01, Box 8440, Gurabo, PR 00778)/ (Office) Tel. & fax: (787) 737-4265/ (Temple) Tel. (787)712-0358/ iskcon_pr@hotmail.com
Hillsborough, North Carolina (New Goloka) — 1032 Dimmocks Mill Rd., 27278/ Tel. (919) 732-6492/ bkgoswami@earthlink.net
◆ **Moundsville, West Virginia (New Vrindaban)** — R.D. No. 1, Box 319, Hare Krishna Ridge, 26041/ Tel. (304) 843-1600; Guest House, (304) 845-5905/ Fax: (304) 854-0023/ mail@newvrindaban.com
Mulberry, Tennessee (Murari-sevaka) — 532 Murari Lane, 37359 (mail: P.O. Box 108, Lynchburg, TN 37352)/ Tel. (931) 632-0632/ Fax: (931) 759-6888/ murari_sevaka@yahoo.com
Port Royal, Pennsylvania (Gita Nagari) — R.D. No. 1, Box 839, 17082/ Tel. (717) 527-4101/ kodwin@yahoo.com
Sandy Ridge, North Carolina (Prabhupada Village) — 1264 Prabhupada Rd., 27046/ Tel. (336) 593-9888

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Gurabo, Puerto Rico — Goura's, Carr. 181, Km 16.9, Bo. Santa Rita, 00778. / Tel. (787) 737-0445 or 648-0472
Hato Rey, Puerto Rico — Tamal Krishna's Veggie Garden, 131 Eleanor Roosevelt, 00918/ Tel. (787) 754-6959/ Fax: (787) 756-7769/ tkveggiegarden@aol.com
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — Govinda's, 1408 South. St., 19146/ Tel. (215) 985-9303/ Fax: (215) 966-1242
Seattle, Washington — My Sweet Lord, 5521 University Way, 98105/ Tel. (425) 643-4664

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Cardif, Wales — The Soul Centre, 116 Cowbridge Rd., Canton/ Tel. +44 (02920) 390391/ the.soul.centre@pamho.net
Coventry, England — Kingfield Rd., Coventry (mail: 19 Gloucester St., Coventry CV1 3BZ)/ Tel. +44 (024) 7655 2822 or 5420/ haridas.kds@pamho.net
Leicester, England — 21 Thoresby St., North Evington, LE5 4GU/ Tel. +44 (0116) 276 2587/ pradyumna.jas@pamho.net
Lesmahagow, Scotland — Karuna Bhavan, Bankhouse Rd., Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire, ML11 0ES/ Tel. +44 (01555) 894790/ Fax: +44 (01555) 894526/ karunabhavan@aol.com
◆ **London, England (city)** — 10 Soho St., W1D 3DL/ Tel. +44 (020) 7437-3662; residential /pujaris, 7439-3606; shop, 7287-0269; Govinda's Restaurant, 7437-4928/ Fax: +44 (020) 7439-1127/ london@pamho.net
◆ **London, England (country)** — Bhaktivedanta Manor, Dharam Marg, Hilfield Lane, Watford, Herts, WD25 8EZ/ Tel. +44 (01923) 857244/ Fax: +44 (01923) 852896/ bhaktivedanta.manor@pamho.net; (for accommodations:) bmguesthouse@gmail.com
London, England (south) — 42 Enmore Road, South Norwood, SE25 5NG/ Tel. +44 (020) 8656 4296
London, England (Kings Cross) — 102 Caledonain Rd., Kings Cross, Islington, N1 9DN/ Tel. +44 (020) 7168 5732/ foodforalluk@aol.com
Manchester, England — 20 Mayfield Rd., Whalley Range, M16 8FT/ Tel. +44 (0161) 226-4416
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England — 304 Westgate Rd., NE4 6AR/ Tel. +44 (0191) 272 1911/ newcastle@iskcon.org.uk
◆ **Swansea, Wales** — 8 Craddock St., SA1 3EN/ Tel. +44 (01792) 468469/ iskcon.swansea@pamho.net; restaurant: govin–das@hotmail.com

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Upper Lough Erne, Northern Ireland — Govindadwipa Dhama, Inisrath Island, Derrylin, Co. Fermanagh, BT92 9GN/ Tel. +44 (028) 6772 1512/ govindadwipa@pamho.net
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AUSTRALIA

Adelaide — 25 Le Hunte St. (mail: P.O. Box 114, Kilburn, SA 5084)/ Tel. & fax: +61 (08) 8359-5120/ iskconsa@tpg.com.au
Brisbane — 95 Bank Rd., Graceville (mail: P.O. Box 83, Indooroopilly), QLD 4068/ Tel. +61 (07) 3379-5455/ Fax: +61 (07) 3379-5880/ brisbane@iskcon.org.au
Canberra — 44 Limestone Ave., Ainslie, ACT 2602 (mail: P.O. Box 1411, Canberra, ACT 2601)/ Tel. & fax: +61 (02) 6262-6208/ iskcon@harekrishnacanberra.com

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Newcastle — 28 Bull St., Mayfield, NSW 2304/ Tel. +61 (02) 4967-7000/ iskcon_newcastle@yahoo.com.au
Perth — 144 Railway Parade (corner of The Strand) [mail: P.O. Box 102], Bayswater, WA 6053/ Tel. +61 (08) 9370-1552/ Fax: +61 (08) 9272-6636/ perth@pamho.net
Sydney — 180 Falcon St., North Sydney, NSW 2060 (mail: P.O. Box 459, Cammeray, NSW 2062)/Tel. +61 (02) 9959-4558/ Fax: +61 (02) 9957-1893/ info@iskcon.com.au
Sydney — Govinda's Yoga and Meditation Centre, 112 Darlinghurst Rd., Darlinghurst NSW 2010 (mail: P.O. Box 174, Kings Cross 1340)/ Tel. +61 (02) 9380-5162/ Fax: +61 (02) 9360-1736/ sita@govindas.com.au

RURAL COMMUNITIES

Bambra, VIC (New Nandagram) — 50 Seaches Outlet, off 1265 Winchelsea Deans Marsh Rd., Bambra VIC 3241/ Tel. +61 (03) 5288-7383
Cessnock, NSW (New Gokula) — Lewis Lane (off Mount View Rd., Millfield, near Cessnock [mail: P.O. Box 399, Cessnock, NSW 2325])/ Tel. +61 (02) 4998-1800/ Fax: +61 (02) 9957-1893/ iskconfarm@mac.com
Murwillumbah, NSW (New Govardhana) — Tyalgum Rd., Eungella (mail: P.O. Box 687), NSW 2484/ Tel. +61 (02) 6672-6579/ Fax: +61 (02) 6672-5498/ ajita@in.com.au

RESTAURANTS

Brisbane — Govinda's, 99 Elizabeth St., 1st floor, QLD 4000/ Tel. +61 (07) 3210-0255
Brisbane — Krishna's Cafe, 1st Floor, 82 Venture St., West End, QLD 4000/ brisbane@pamho.net
Cairns — Gaura Nitai's, 55 Spence St., Cairns, QLD/ Tel. +61 (07) 4031-2255 or (0425) 725 901/ Fax: +61 (07) 4031 2256
Christchurch, NZ — 83 Bealey Ave. (mail: P.O. Box 25-190)/ Tel. +64 (03) 366-5174/ Fax: +64 (03) 366-1965/ iskconchch@clear.net.nz
Hamilton, NZ — 188 Maui St., RD 8, Te Rapa/ Tel. +64 (07) 850-5108/ rmaster@wave.co.nz
Labasa, Fiji — Delailabasa (mail: P.O. Box 133)/ Tel. +679 812912
Lautoka, Fiji — 5 Tavewa Ave. (mail: P.O. Box 125)/ Tel. +679 6664112/ regprakash@excite.com
Maroochydore — Govinda's Vegetarian Cafe, 2/7 First Avenue, QLD 4558/ Tel. +61 (07) 5451-0299
Melbourne — Crossways, 1st Floor, 123 Swanston St., VIC 3000/ Tel. +61 (03) 9650-2939
Melbourne — Gopal's, 139 Swanston St., VIC 3000/ Tel. +61 (03) 9650-1578
Nausori, Fiji — Hare Krishna Cultural Centre, 2nd Floor, Shop & Save Building, 11 Gulam Nadi St., Nausori Town (mail: P.O. Box 2183, Govt. Bldgs., Suva)/ Tel. +679 9969748 or 3475097/ Fax : +679 3477436/ vdas@frca.org.fj
Rakiraki, Fiji — Rewasa (mail: P.O. Box 204)/ Tel. +679 694243
Suva, Fiji — 166 Brewster St. (mail: P.O. Box 4299, Samabula)/ Tel. +679 3318441/ Fax: +679 3319097/ iskconsuva@connect.com.fj
Wellington, NZ — 105 Newlands Rd., Newlands/ Tel. +64 (04) 478-4108/ iskcon.wellington@paradise.net.nz
Wellington, NZ — Gaura Yoga Centre, 1st Floor, 175 Vivian St. (mail: P.O. Box 6271, Marion Square)/Tel. +64 (04) 801-5500

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Auckland, NZ (New Varshan) — Hwy. 28, Riverhead, next to Huapai Golf Course (mail: R.D. 2, Kumeu)/ Tel. +64 (09) 412-8075/ Fax: +64 (09) 412-7130

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*The full list appears in the January/February and July/August issues, and is always available at Krishna.com, where the list also includes Krishna conscious gatherings.

Workplace Meditation

I WORK ON A LAPTOP COMPUTER, which I take home with me every night. When I come into the office in the morning, I have to get down on my hands and knees to plug my power cable into an electrical outlet under my desk. While I was doing that one morning, I thought about the symbolism of my, in effect, bowing down to my desk each morning as I begin my service to Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa: I'm bowing to my *yajña-sthāna* ("place of sacrifice"), where I try to do my part to push forward Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement.

The privilege of serving Kṛṣṇa is a great gift received from the Lord and His representatives. Prabhupāda traveled the world delivering that gift, which anyone with the desire for self-fulfillment can accept. Each one of us has the opportunity to take advantage of that gift by making our work an offering to the Lord.

Devotional service to Kṛṣṇa comes in many forms, beginning with hearing about Him and chanting His holy names. While some of us might be in the position to spend our lives hearing and chanting, most of us have responsibilities that require us to work. Whatever our occupation may be (with a few exceptions), we can offer it to Kṛṣṇa in a mood of service. If we think of our place of work as our *yajña-sthāna,* Kṛṣṇa will accept our work as an offering to Him. He says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.46) that by worshiping Him we can attain perfection by performing our own work (*sva-karmaṇā*).

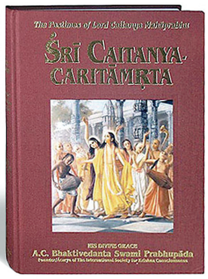
Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his purport to that verse: "Everyone should think that he is engaged in a particular type of occupation by Hṛṣīkeśa, the master of the senses. And by the result of the work in which one is engaged, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, should be worshiped. If one thinks always in this way, in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then, by the grace of the Lord, he becomes fully aware of everything. That is the perfection of life."

Here Prabhupāda says that one should worship the Lord by "the result" of one's work. Some of us can directly serve the Lord through our occupations. For example, we might be able to offer our professional services to the Lord's devotees without charge. But that might be hard if our work involves moving papers from our in-box to our out-box or moving a widget along an assembly line. But the "result" of our work also includes our income. So we can serve the Lord by giving financial support to the temple or to projects involved in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In serving Kṛṣṇa, our frame of mind is important. It is best to offer our work to the Lord before we do it, to offer our money before we earn it—rather than as an afterthought. Beginning our workday with the thought that our job is an offering to Kṛṣṇa will purify our work and our hearts.

Prabhupāda translates the word *yajña,* which means an offering to the Lord, as "sacrifice." Any offering to Kṛṣṇa is technically a *yajña,* but the English word *sacrifice* implies giving up something we're attached to. It's not easy to give up what we've worked hard to get. But if we do so, Kṛṣṇa will be pleased, and His pleasure is our perfection. —*Nāgarāja Dāsa*

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu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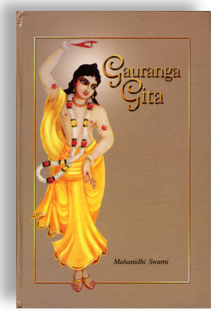
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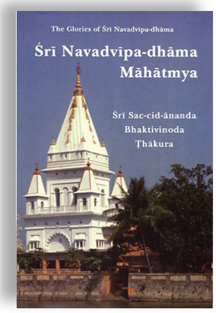
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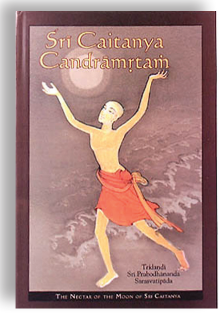
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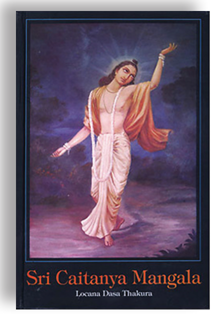
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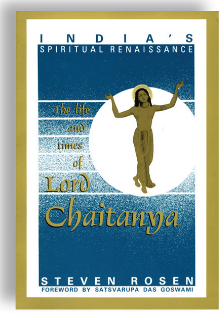
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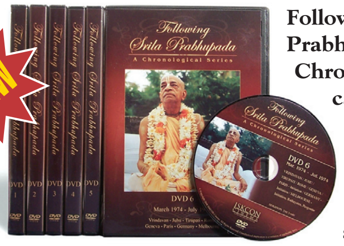
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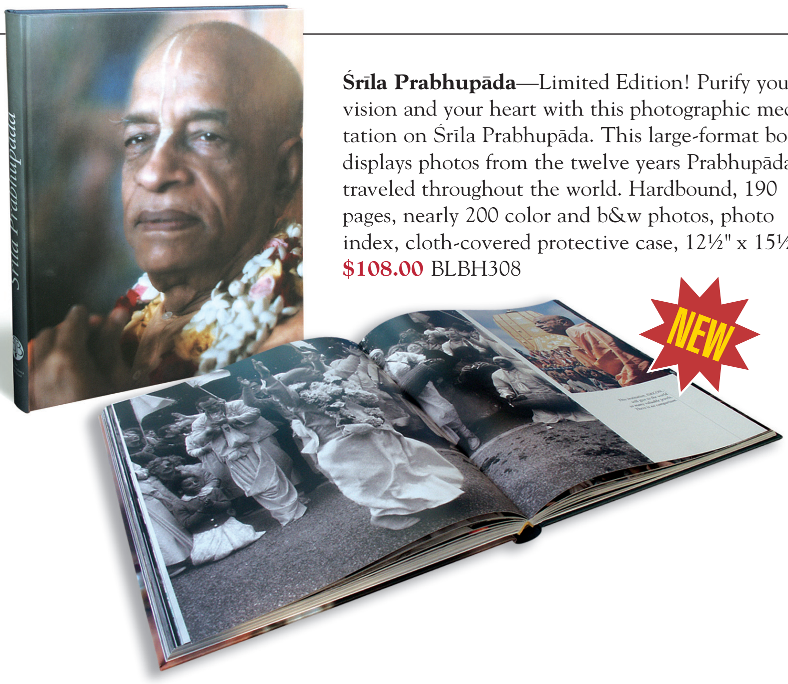
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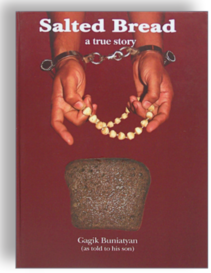
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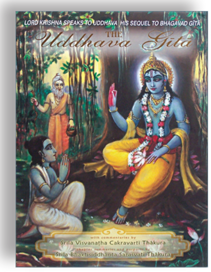
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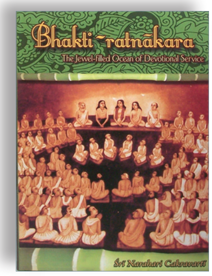
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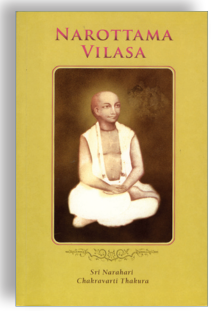
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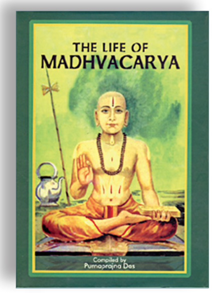
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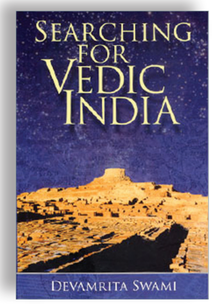
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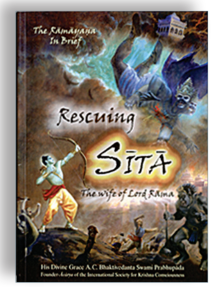
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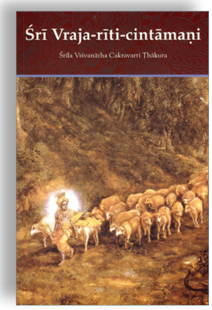
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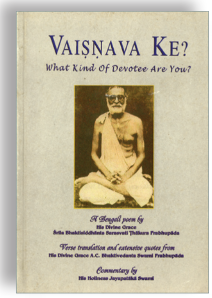
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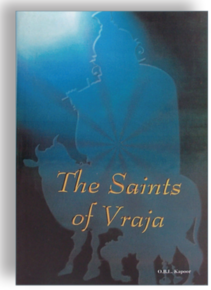
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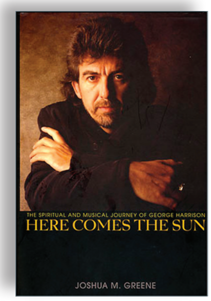
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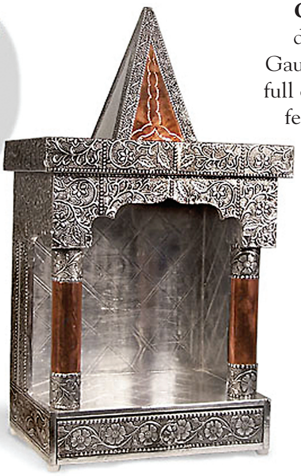

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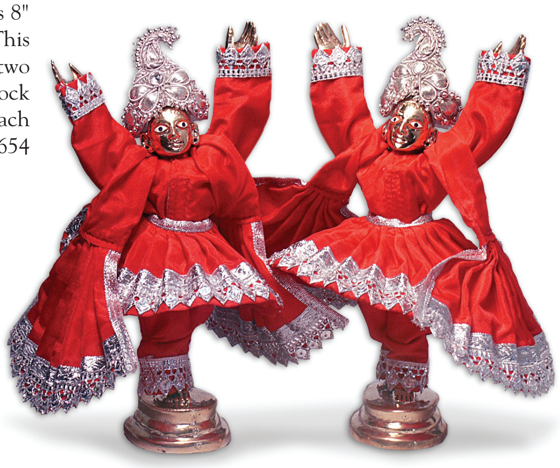

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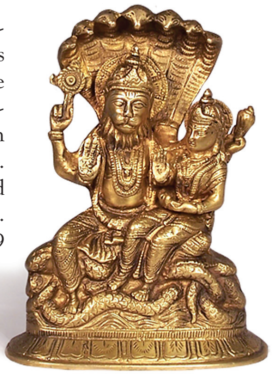

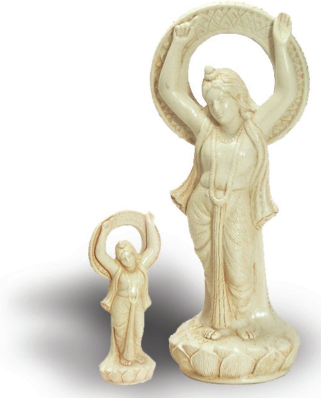

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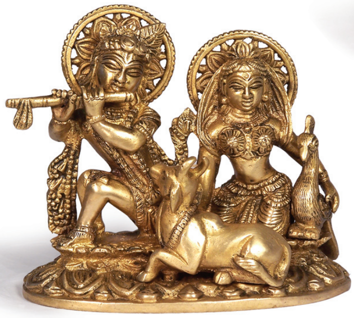

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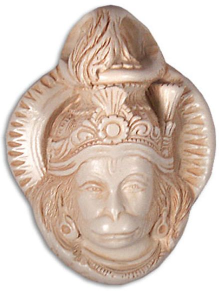

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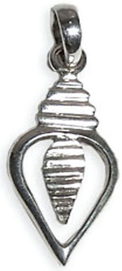

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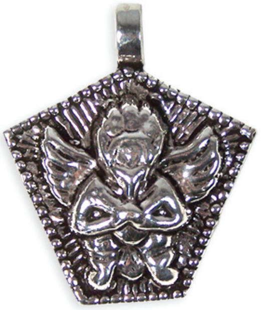

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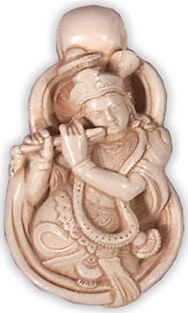

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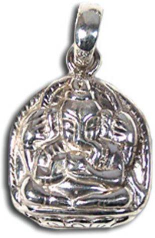

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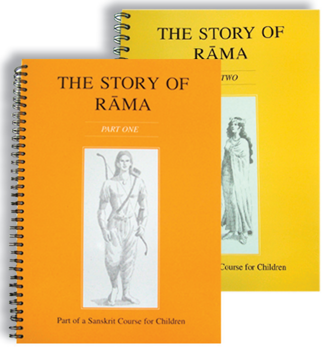
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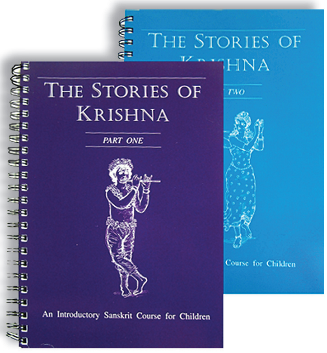
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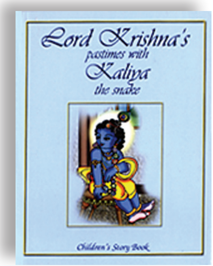
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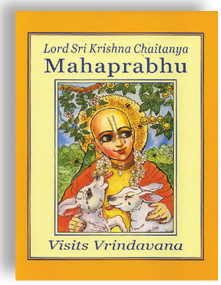
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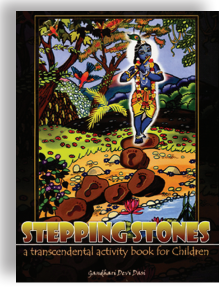
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His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.10.4, Purport

By being fixed in this knowledge, one can attain to the transcendental nature, which is like My own nature. Thus established, one is not born at the time of creation nor disturbed at the time of dissolution.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Bhagavad-gītā 14.2

Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto Him [Kṛṣṇa] who is the associate of the members of the Yadu dynasty and who is always a problem for the nondevotees. He is the supreme enjoyer of both the material and spiritual worlds, yet He enjoys His own abode in the spiritual sky. There is no one equal to Him because His transcendental opulence is immeasurable.

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.4.14

The Supreme Lord is full of eternity, knowledge and bliss. He is always embraced in the spiritual world by His divine energies called *hlādinī* (the ecstatic potency) and *saṁvit* (the omniscient potency). In the material world the individual soul (*jīva*) experiences many sufferings, being covered by his ignorance.

Sarvajñā-sūkta
Quoted by Jīva Gosvāmī
in *Bhagavat-sandarbha*

Bhagavān is the one Supreme Being who expands all souls and all matter by His inconceivable energy (*acintya-śakti*) and then enters into these emanations as the Supreme Lord (*īśvara-svarūpa*). He also transcends all souls and matter as the impersonal Brahman effulgence (*brahma-svarūpa*), far beyond all imagination. He manifests His divine potency (*para-śakti*) to reveal His form of eternity, knowledge, and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda-svarūpa*), thereby becoming the object of devotion for all souls.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Vaiṣṇava-siddhānta-mālā, Chapter 2

The propensity for selfish enjoyment deadens the pure function of the soul.

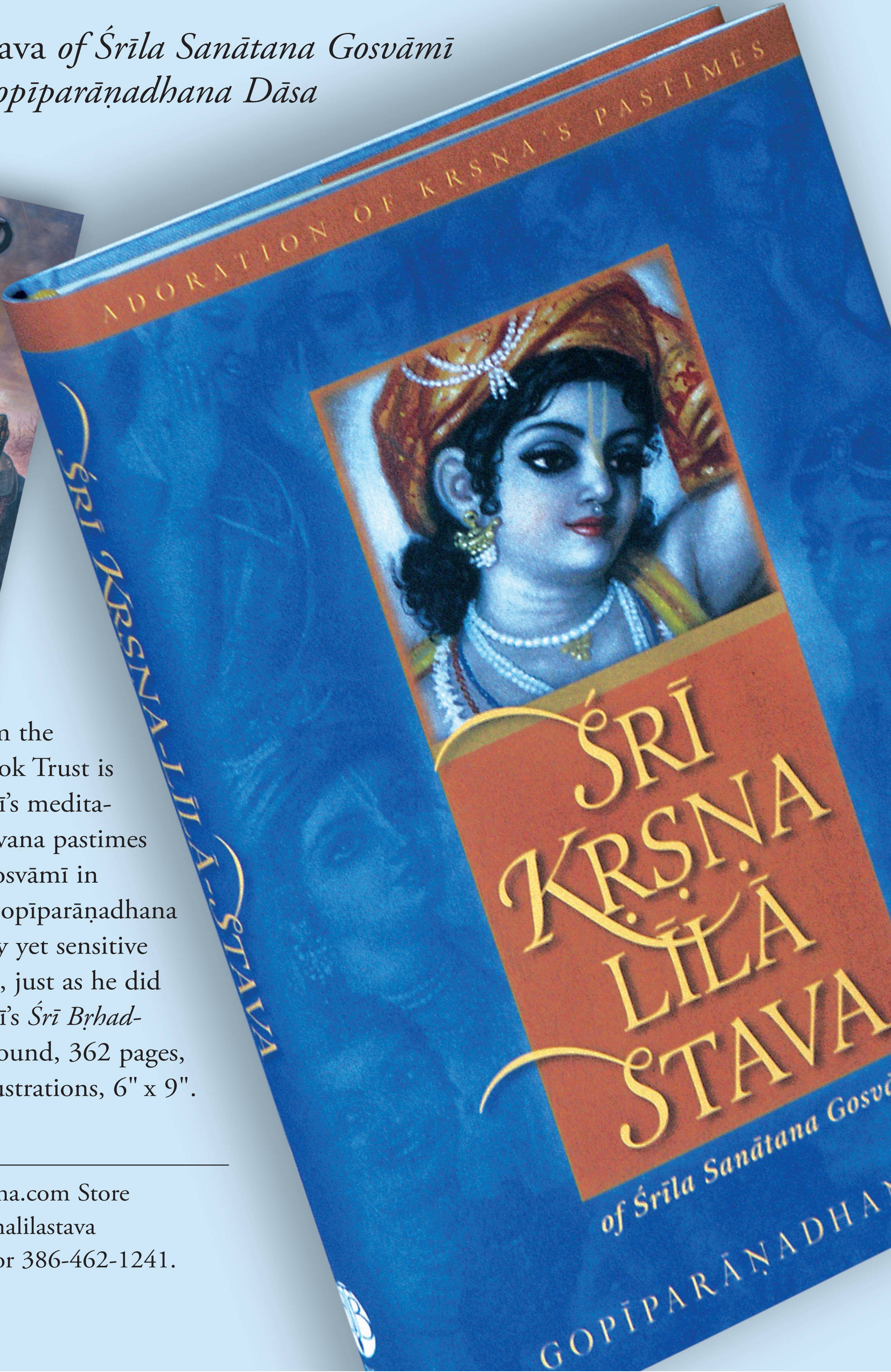
Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Lecture, Vṛndāvana, Kārttika 1928

Just as the minds of young girls take pleasure in young boys, and young boys take pleasure in young girls, kindly allow my mind to take pleasure in You [Kṛṣṇa] alone.

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.53

Glorifying the Pastimes of God

Śrī Kṛṣṇa-līla-stava *of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī*
Translated by Gopīparāṇadhana Dāsa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